# BUDDHISM

## CRITICAL CONCEPTS IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Edited by
PAUL WILLIAMS

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## Critical Concepts in Religious Studies

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**Volume III**

The Origins and Nature of Mahāyāna Buddhism;
Some Mahāyāna Religious Topics

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## Disclaimer

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# *SĀKIYABHIKKHU/SAKYABHIKKHU/ ŚĀKYABHIKṢU*

## A mistaken link to the Mahāyāna?[1]

*L.S. Cousins*

Source: *Nagoya Studies in Indian Culture and Buddhism*, Saṃbhāṣā 23 (2003): 1–27.

In the Kuṣāṇa period[2] it is quite common for inscriptions to refer to the monastic fraternity either of the donor (when himself a monk) or of the recipients. Later this is less common and we see instead a growing practice of making donatory inscriptions which do not specify any monastic school. In the case of donors new titles become prevalent, while in the case of recipients it becomes more normal to donate to a monastery rather than to a monastic lineage. In two papers published around 1952 and 1962[3] Masao Shizutani referred to this development and conjectured that 'the new title Śākyabhikṣu was of Mahāyāna origin'. He was no doubt aware that earlier scholars had taken it to mean 'Buddhist monk';[4] so he adds the comment that:

> "*This conjecture, however, may possibly be erroneous, and the title may have been devised in order to distinguish the Buddhist monks from the Jaina monks.*"[5]

This was followed up by H. Sarkar in 1968. Sarkar also believed that the *Śākya-bhikṣus* could be identified as a distinct group, partly on the basis of their names.[6] Then in an influential article first published in 1979 Gregory Schopen developed the same idea in rather more detail.[7] To summarize the facts on which he based his position:

1. There is a donatory formula found in sources from around the fourth century and down to around the thirteenth century.
2. This formula involves the donation of good fortune (*puṇya*) to all beings, sometimes with an additional reference to the donor's family (kinship or monastic). In its full form it occurs with a phrase indicating that this is in order to obtain supreme knowledge (*anuttara-jñāna*).

3. The same donatory formula is found in the colophons of two Mahāyāna manuscripts from Gilgit and in the colophons of a number of post-tenth century Mahāyāna manuscripts, mostly from Nepal.
4. Many of the donors bear the titles of either *Śākya-bhikṣu* or *paramopāsaka*.

Schopen adds to the references to epigraphic materials initially collected by Shizutani and collects together a total of fifty seven passages. At the end of this article he puts forward as a 'possible interpretation' the view that from the fourth century and throughout the Gupta period the followers of the Mahāyāna:

> "*appear to have gone by the names śākyabhikṣu/paramopāsaka – at least in inscriptions – and these names were never dropped.*"[8]

I believe this conclusion to be mistaken. It seems in clear contradiction to the literary sources and is not clearly required even by the inscriptional evidence. In what follows I shall address first the usage of *Sākiya-bhikkhu* and *Sakya-bhikkhu* in Pali sources, then *Śākya* or *Sakka* by itself (i.e. without or separated from *bhikṣu*), then *Śākya-bhikṣu* and the earlier Pali *Sakkaputtiya*. Finally I discuss *paramopāsaka* and then look at the donatory formula itself.

## *Sākiya(-bhikkhu)* and *Sakya-bhikkhu* in Pali

To begin with, let me turn to some Pali passages which have not as far as I know been noticed in this context.

In the commentary to the *Cūḷa-Nārada-jātaka*[9] there is a reference to a *Sākiya-bhikkhu* – a mother desirous of finding a husband for her daughter seeks to arrange for a *Sākiya-bhikkhu* to become enamoured of her daughter. The passage is clearly translated by A.L. Rowse:

> "*So her mother thought to herself: 'This my daughter is of full age, yet no one chooses her. I will use her as bait for a fish, and make one of those Sākiya ascetics come back to the world, and live upon him'.*" (Ja Trsl. IV 136).

The story is set in the time of the Buddha and it is clear from the context that the term simply means any *bhikkhu* who is a follower of the Buddha. Here it cannot possibly mean Mahāyānist. It could conceivably mean a *bhikkhu* who is of the *Sākiya* (*Śākya*) clan, but that seems unlikely.

The exact date and authorship of the *Jātaka commentary* is still unclear. Traditionally it is attributed to Buddhaghosa, but we should not necessarily take this too literally. Even if true, it might only mean that it was compiled by a group under Buddhaghosa's presidency. More probably, we should take the attribution as simply meaning 'text of the school of Buddhaghosa, produced relatively close to his time' and this is evident enough from its content.

The visit of Buddhaghosa to Ceylon is usually dated to the reign of Mahānāma in the early fifth century A.D. but this dating is dependent upon a tradition not recorded until some seven hundred or so years later. So it is better to take Buddhaghosa's *floruit* as in the fourth century A.D. (but not earlier, assuming he is posterior to the extant *Dīpavaṃsa*).[10] This would mean that the date of the *Jātaka commentary* must lie between then and the sixth century A.D.

An even earlier Pali passage is found in the *Apadāna*, a work included in the Canon but generally recognized to be one of the latest works admitted.[11] The story concerns the Buddhist nun Bhaddā Kesakuṇḍalā (born in Rājagaha) who had previously ordained with the white-robed ones (*seta-vattha*). They pulled out her hair with an implement; so the commentator Dhammapāla is probably correct in understanding them as being Jains (*nigaṇṭha*). She learned their doctrine (*samaya*) and lived alone, investigating it.

Then a human hand (from a cemetery) was cut off and left near her. Seeing the hand, she obtained the meditative object (*nimitta*) which is 'maggot-ridden' (*puḷavâkula* = *puḷavaka*).[12] Emerging from that experience, she was deeply moved (*saṃvigga*) and naturally asked her co-practitioners. They replied that the Sakya monks (*Sakya-bhikkhavo*) know about this thing (*attha*). The point of the story is that her experience was something unknown to the Jains and so she had to turn to the disciples of the Buddha. So far as I know, this kind of cemetery meditation on the stages of decomposition of a corpse is not recorded as a Jain practice and may well have been typically or even uniquely Buddhist at this time. So the spontaneous occurrence of an experience of this type could well lead to mention of the Buddhist practice.

However this may be, it is quite clear that the expression *Sakya-bhikkhu* here can only be intended to designate a Buddhist monk. That it does in fact mean 'Buddhist monk' is further confirmed by a third Pali occurrence. Commenting on a passage found in several places which describes the Ājīvaka doctrine of the six *abhijātis*, Buddhaghosa refers to *bhikkhus*. The *ṭīkā* to his *Majjhimâgama commentary* explains this as *Sākiya bhikkhus*.[13] Elsewhere in parallel passages the *ṭīkās* gloss this instead as '*bhikkhus* in the *Buddhasāsana*'.[14] So there can be hardly any doubt that for the *ṭīkā-kāra* a *Sākiya bhikkhu* is precisely a Buddhist monk.

## *Śākya* in Sanskrit texts

The earliest of the small number of extant Sanskrit textual passages given in the St. Petersburg Dictionary belong to the period around and just after the middle of the first millennium A.D. These include passages in works of Varāhamihira (fl. c. 550 A.D.) and the slightly later Daṇḍin. It is noticeable that the earliest of the inscriptions listed by Schopen belong to the period from the fifth century to the seventh century A.D. (One may be fourth century.) A much earlier date is in any case perhaps unlikely in inscriptions, since this is mainly a Sanskrit usage and might not have been widely current in the period when Middle Indian was

still normative for most Buddhist schools. Schopen points out that inscriptions containing the term *Śākya-bhikṣu* are absent from the south and from the north-west. So in fact its geographical distribution largely coincides with that of the Pudgalavādin schools.

In the *Bṛhatsaṃhitā* Varāhamihira refers to *Śākyas* and teachers (*upādhyāya*) together with Jains (*ārhata*) and Jain ascetics in the final stages (*nirgranthi*).[15] Probably the meaning here is in fact *Śākyas* and their teachers. They are in any case two distinct items, since the list occurs in the treatment of a type of horary astrology in which significance is drawn from whoever the querent is looking at. So in the case in question if the questioner looks at a Buddhist, the answer should concern a thief; if at his teacher, then the matter at hand concerns a military officer (*camūpati*); if at a Jain or a Jain ascetic, then it concerns a merchant or a slave-girl respectively. It is not possible to tell from this passage alone whether Śākya here means a Buddhist in general or something more specific. Most probably, however, since the Indian population at large did not identify itself as exclusively Vaiṣṇava or Buddhist or Śaiva or Jain, but rather gave support on an *ad hoc* basis, it means both junior Buddhist monks and committed lay supporters (*upāsaka*).

A later passage is rather clearer. In a chapter concerned with the setting up of images of deities, Varāhamihira lists those who should do this in each case – Bhāgavatas for (an image of) Viṣṇu, Magas for the Sun god, brahmins who wear ash for Śiva, those familiar with the setting up of the *maṇḍala* for the goddesses, brahmins for Brahmā, Śākyas for the compassionate one (*sarva-hita*) whose mind is at peace and naked ascetics for the Jinas.[16] The tenth century commentator Bhaṭṭotpala specifies that the *Śākyas* are those who wear red (*raktapaṭa*), a term which sometimes refers to Buddhist monks in texts of the period when Buddhist monks were still a living presence in most parts of India.[17] Moreover, he explains 'all-compassionate' as referring to the Buddha.[18] So there can be hardly any doubt that *Śākya* here means 'Buddhist monk'.

In fact, an earlier mention of the word *Śākya* occurs in the *Yavanajātaka* of Sphujidhvaja (YJ chap. 22, v. 4), composed in A.D. 269/270. Here we learn that a strong Mars produces a *Śākya-śramaṇa* 'with bad character'. Indeed, David Pingree refers to a series of seven later astrological writers, all dependent upon Sphujidhvaja.[19] These variously refer in the same context to the *Śākya-śramaṇa*, the *raktapaṭa*, the *Śākya-yogin* and the *Bauddhāśraya*. Other planets when strong produce other types of religious practitioner. So there can be hardly any doubt that the expression is already current in this sense in the second century A.D.

Indeed this is not the only earlier Sanskrit reference. In chapter two of the *Arthaśāstra*, we find a prohibition of the feeding at rites for ancestors of renunciants (*vṛṣala-pravrajita*) such as *Śākyas* and *Ājīvakas*.[20] But probably the dating of the *Arthaśāstra* is controversial; so I will not attempt to make any use of this reference for dating purposes. We can also note a passage in Kumārila's *Ślokavarttika*[21] where the views of the Śākya are contrasted with those of the

Vaiśeṣika and Sāṃkhya schools. Interestingly, it is the specifically Vaibhāṣika notion of the three kinds of *asaṃskṛta-dharma* that is referred to.[22]

We also find a similar usage in Jain texts. The sixth century Jain commentator Jinabhadra has:

> *"If the thought of the Jina is your standard, don't reject substantiality, since, if substance is destroyed, destruction of everything would follow for you, just as for a Buddhist."*[23]

Koṭyāryavādi, who completes this part of Jinabhadra's unfinished auto-commentary, explains that this means like a Buddhist because you accept only the modifications (*paryāya-mātra-grāhitvāt Śākyavat*) and not substance (*dravyârtha*).[24]

In the *Śrāvakaprajñapti*, a work attributed to Umāsvāti and in any case pre-fifth century, we find reference to speaking praise of *Sakkas*, etc. Haribhadra's eighth century Sanskrit commentary explains this as red monks (*rakta-bhikṣavaḥ*).[25] Likewise, the relatively early *Piṇḍa-nijjutti* includes the *Sakka* in a list of five kinds of *samaṇa*.[26] Jinadāsa's *Uttarādhyayana-cūrṇi* also mentions the *Śākyas*, as do various works of Haribhadra, Abhayadeva, and Śīlāṅka.[27] Later Prakrit texts also cite other examples of this usage.[28]

## *Śākyârya-bhikṣu-saṅgha* and *Śākyopāsaka* in epigraphic sources

In a copper-plate grant of Guhasena of Valabhī, dated to the year 246 of the Gupta era, the king grants the revenues (cash and produce and labour) of a number of villages to provide the four requisites to the monks in the *mahāvihāra* of Duḍḍā, founded by the reverend Duḍḍā and situated in the neighbourhood of Valabhī. More exactly, the monks are referred to as the noble monastic order of the *Śākyas* who belong to the eighteen *nikāyas* and have come from many places.[29] Later in the same epigraph the expression 'noble monastic order of the *Śākyas*' recurs.[30] The monastic university of Valabhī is known from a number of sources as a major centre of Buddhism in this period, especially but not exclusively for the non-Mahāyāna traditions, (and particularly those of the Pudgalavādin schools). In this context then the term *Śākya* again clearly means simply 'Buddhist'.

A similar expression occurs in another grant of the same sixth century king: 'the noble monastic order who belong to the eighteen *nikāyas* and have come from many places'.[31] In the former epigraph of this king he is referred to as a Śaiva devotee (*parama-māheśvara*), whereas here he is designated as a Buddhist disciple (*paramopāsaka*). It seems natural that a Śaiva king (or a Śaiva scribe working for a Śaiva dynasty) might designate the monastic order as Buddhist (*Śākya*) and equally natural that, if he has become a leading Buddhist devotee, there would be no need to refer specifically to the Buddhist nature of the order to which he is donating.

We will refer again to this inscription, but for now we should also note the occurrence several times of the expression *Śākyopāsaka*. It is found at Mathurā, at Kuda and probably at Ajaṇṭā, although the last is in the uncertain form of '*Śākya uṣaka*'. The latter two inscriptions probably date to around the fifth and sixth centuries. As regards the one from Mathurā, according to Lüders: "For palaeographic reasons the date of the inscription cannot be later than the beginning of the Kuṣāṇ rule".[32] This, then, with the passages in the *Arthaśāstra* and the *Apadāna* is probably the earliest occurrence of the word *Śākya* in this sense. In this particular case it is found on the pedestal of a seated Buddha from the site of a Buddhist monastery some twelve miles west of the town of Mathurā (outside the village of Anyōr). The inscription records the gift of a Buddha image to the monastery 'for the happiness and benefit of all beings' (*hita-sukh'-artha[ṃ]*). We will have occasion to return to the occurrence of this type of formula when we turn to the donatory formulae which Schopen and Shizutani associate with the Mahāyāna.

## *Śākya-bhikṣu* in Sanskrit texts

Moving on to the textual occurrences of the term *Śākya-bhikṣu*, we turn again to Varāhamihira. In a passage listing a number of persons and things under the rulership of the planet Mars, he includes *Śākya-bhikṣu*.[33] It does not seem very likely that Mahāyānists in particular would be under the rulership of Mars and in fact the commentator again explains as the red-robed ascetics.[34] A similar notion recurs later in the *Bṛhatsaṃhitā* when we learn that activities connected with Buddhist monks (and various others including doctors and thieves) will be fruitful on a day presided over by the planet Mars.[35] Needless to say, the association of the planet Mars with the colour red is very ancient.[36]

*Manu-smṛti* (Man chap. IV, v.30) refers to *pāṣaṇḍins* among those who should not be honoured by brahmins. The commentator Kullūkabhaṭṭa (twelfth or thirteenth century) explains this as referring to *śākyabhikṣu[ka]s*, *kṣapaṇakas*, and so on. Earlier (and later) commentators make it certain that the reference is to Buddhist and Jain monks.[37] We should note also the references to a *Śākyabhikṣukī* in the *Daśakumāracarita* (Daśa 79, 1.11) and in the *Padmaprābhṛtaka* (PP after v. 21). In the latter work a corrupt (*duṣṭa*) Śākyabhikṣu is a character (between verses 23 and 25).

The introductory stanzas to the treatise on the different doctrines (*samayabheda*) attributed to Vasumitra (extant only in translation) appear to contain a reference to him as a *śākya-bhikṣu*. This would take the term back to the third or fourth century A.D., the likely date of Vasumitra, but in fact the reference is in one of the two stanzas which are absent from the first Chinese translation.[38] Since the three authentic stanzas simply state the objective of the treatise and contrast sharply with the two additional stanzas which name Vasumitra and refer to him in a way which is unlikely to have been original, we can be confident that they are a later addition. Since they do appear to be found in the Tibetan version,

we can be reasonably sure that they were added in India and prior to the time of Paramārtha (sixth century A.D.), but after the first Chinese translation which was made between 385 and 431 A.D. So this is a relevant source for the usage of *śākya-bhikṣu*, dating to around the fifth century A.D.

The farce *Mattavilāsavikrama*, written by Mahendravikrama around 600 A.D. has as one of its principal characters an entertainingly improbable Buddhist monk (residing in the Rāja-vihāra at Kañcipura).[39] He is usually referred to as a Śākya-bhikṣu, but there is no indication of any Mahāyāna element; rather, he is certainly just a Buddhist monk in general.

At a later date in ninth century Kashmir the Śaiva writer Jayantabhaṭṭa refers to the exponents of the Buddhist view as *Śākya-bhikṣus*.[40] The same author's philosophical drama *Āgamaḍambara* introduces the Buddhist proponent and his disciple as a *Śākya-bhikṣu* (and his *upāsaka*) dressed in red.[41] The monk in question clearly expounds Yogācārin views at some points, but it is unlikely that Jayantabhaṭṭa is distinguishing Mahāyānists in particular. To this can be added a number of manuscript colophons identified (and discussed) by Schopen, including two from Gilgit.

## *Śākya-bhikṣu, Sakkaputtiya* and the Śakya lineage

Richard Cohen draws attention to an additional Sanskrit reference to *Śākya-bhikṣu* in the *Saṅghabhedavastu* of the *Mūlasarvāstivādin Vinaya*.[42] This presents the events preceding the newly-awakened Buddha's return to his home-town of Kapilavastu. Udāyin (Kālodāyin) is the last of a series of messengers sent by King Śuddhodana to invite his son to return home for the first time and the first to actually return.[43] He is told by the Buddha to announce himself at the entrance with the words: "a *Śākya-bhikṣu* has come." And, if asked, he is to be told that there are other such *Śākya-bhikṣus* (i.e. the previous messengers who did not return).

Cohen is obviously correct that in this context the term *Śākya-bhikṣu* refers to a monk who is by birth a member of the Śakya clan. He is right also to emphasize that *śākya* is a kinship term and makes a number of valid points in relation to this. He doesn't however pay any attention to the Pali sources; so I would like to say a little about that.

The name of the Buddha's clan occurs in the forms *Sakka*, *Sakya* and *Sākiya* in the Pali texts. For the most part the form *Sakka* occurs in the singular with the other two forms in the plural, although there are some exceptions.[44] I take it that this is because the earlier mentions mostly refer to named individuals and that therefore *Sakka* is probably the oldest form. Given the general unreliability of etymologies of proper names, this perhaps leaves the historical correctness of the more Sanskritized forms in doubt, but I shall assume here that the name of the clan corresponds either to Sanskrit *Śakya* or *Śākya*.[45]

Nearly forty times in the older texts of the Canon we meet the expression "the mendicant Gotama is a member of the Sakya clan, one who has gone forth

from the Sakya family" (*samaṇo khalu bho Gotamo Sakya-putto Sakya-kulā pabbajito*).[46] The expression *Sakyaputta* here does not mean 'son of the Sakyan' (or similar), as it is sometimes taken. Rather °*putta-* at the end of a compound simply means male member of a clan or extended family. In fact, it is used occasionally of others too, e.g. Upananda, Hatthaka and Nanda, but it is clear that as the most famous member of the lineage, the Buddha soon becomes the Sakyaputta par excellence.

That being so, it is perhaps not surprising that the *vṛddhi* formation from that: *Sakkaputtiya-*(°*ika-*) rapidly becomes the normal, if not the only, expression for Buddhist monk as opposed to, say, Jaina or Ājīvaka monk. In the *Vinaya-piṭaka* it occurs more than two hundred times.[47] In the *Sutta-piṭaka* more than sixty times.[48] I take '*samaṇo Sakyaputtiyo*' as meaning 'mendicant connected with the famous member of the Sakya clan' i.e. 'follower of the Sakyaputta'. At some point this is further developed into the notion that Buddhist monks (or some of them) are the *dhamma* heirs of the Buddha and hence in some sense themselves members of the Sakya clan.[49]

It is noticeable that the term becomes less frequent in later texts.[50] There are perhaps two reasons for this. Firstly it is more natural to use such an expression in a pluralist situation i.e. when non-Buddhist mendicants are frequent. With the growth of the Buddhist order that became less often the case, particularly in outlying areas such as Ceylon and the North-West. But one would expect variation over time depending on the local numbers of (e.g.) Jain monks. Secondly, the progress of Sanskritization and the increasing influence of Sanskritic stylistic considerations in some contexts probably made a term such as *Śākyaputr(ī)ya* seem less attractive than the neater *Śākya* 'follower of the Śakya'.

## *paramopāsaka* in epigraphic sources

An important part of Schopen's argument is that the terms *Śākyabhikṣu* and *paramopāsaka* refer respectively to monks and lay individuals belonging to the same group. This had always to be doubtful, given that he in fact cites a case from a colophon of the Pāla period where someone is referred to as both – it is rather difficult to see how anyone can be simultaneously both a monk and a layman! In fact several scholars have questioned whether the term *paramopāsaka* can have this meaning.[51]

We already saw (above p. 8) that in two grants of the Maitraka king, Guhasena of Valabhī, *paramopāsaka* replaces *paramamaheśvara*. This places the expression in close relationship with a series of other epigraphic terms which similarly express a relationship of affiliation to a religious group or deity. Other examples include: *parama-bhāgavata, parama-saugata, parama-tāthāgata* and so on.[52] Such expressions indicate either personal affiliation of the individual or a familial affiliation to an *iṣṭa-devatā* or something similar. In most cases this would not involve any kind of exclusivity. In some cases it may rather indicate how the scribe or a palace official wished to identify the donor.

In effect then, if we restrict our investigation to an early date (i.e. prior to Pāla times) there are just nine epigraphs which mention *paramopāsaka/°ikā* from four locations: Sarnath, Valabhī, Ajaṇṭā and Katmandu. They are listed in Table One below. (Later occurrences which are known to me are listed in Appendix A.) The Ajaṇṭā reference is, however, suspect;[53] so we have in fact just two from Valabhī, five from Sarnath and one from Katmandu. According to Lüders (Ep. Ind.), the examples from Sarnath are definitely later than A.D. 400.

According to the Chinese pilgrim Hsüan-tsang, the Sāmitīya (Sāṃmatīya) school was very numerous at Valabhī. We know also from an inscription from Sarnath that the Sāmitīya school claimed to have replaced the Sarvāstivādins at nearby Vāraṇāsi. So the data are quite compatible with the supposition that the term *paramopāsaka* was initially current among the Pudgalavādin schools. This could be either a peculiarity of the terminology of this school or a regional usage from some area near Valabhī. Later it would have spread out from this and other Sāmitīya centres in the Pāla domains to be more generally adopted.[54] Very likely too some of the later branches of the Sāmitīya school adopted the Mahāyāna.

Literary sources too might suggest that the term *paramopāsaka* is unlikely to have the kind of specificity that Schopen's argument requires. In the final

*Table 1*[57]

| *Shizutani II* | *Schopen* | *modern state* | *donor information* | *dating* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 129 | Sā i D(a)16 | U.P. (Sarnath) | *paramopāsaka*-Kīrtti | characters of 4th or 5th cent. A.D. |
| 137 | Sā i B(d)I | U.P. (Sarnath) | *paramopāsaka-viṣayapati*-Suyāttra | |
| 172 | | Gujarat (Valabhī) | the vihāra at Valabhī made by *paramopāsikā* Duḍḍā | Gupta 216 = A.D. 534–5 |
| 176 | – | Gujarat (Valabhī) | king Guhasena | Gupta 248 = A.D. 566–7 |
| 142 | Sā i D(a)18 | U.P. (Sarnath) | *paramopāsaka* Bhavarudra | characters of the 6th century A.D. |
| 156 | Sā iv 19 (p. 127) | U.P. (Sarnath) | *paramopāsaka*-Narṃṇaṇa | characters of the 6th century A.D. |
| 33 | Aj iv a 5* | Maharashtra | *<para>mo[pā]sa ka* Upendra | |
| 128 | Sā i D(a)15 | U.P. (Sarnath) | *paramopāsikā* Sulakṣmaṇā | Gupta characters |
| | | Katmandu | *paramopāsaka* Maṇigupta's wife | 6th century |

chapter of the *Harṣa-carita*, the sage Divākaramitra is depicted as attended by various devotees – followers of different religious traditions and animals of various kinds. Among the latter are "monkeys who are *paramopāsakas*, committed to the three refuges and active in the (ritual) service of shrines, parrots skilled in the religion of the *Śākya* and providing instruction in the *Kośa*."[55] There seems no reason to associate the monkeys with the Mahāyāna! They are simply 'highly devoted'. We should also note here that the term *mahā-upāsaka-/°ikā* in Pali sources indicates a wealthy lay supporter of status.[56]

## Schopen's argument

Schopen's argument depends on three separate points. He is aware that the part of his argument that depends on the donatory formula is by itself weak; so he has tried to strengthen his thesis by seeking to identify a specifically Mahāyānist group who usually refer to themselves, when lay, as *paramopāsaka* and, when monks, as *Śākya-bhikṣu*. The evidence I have cited above shows beyond doubt that the terms do not in themselves carry any Mahāyānist meaning. *Paramopāsaka* is simply a term for a committed lay supporter of high standing, while *Śākya-bhikṣu* is a term used regularly by non-Buddhists (and sometimes by Buddhists too) to refer to members of the Buddhist monastic order.

Of course, this doesn't completely rule out Schopen's position. Even if these two designations might be used by non-Mahāyānists, they could still have been used also by a specific Mahāyānist group at some point. There is no doubt that a few of the early epigraphs belonging to this supposed group are made by individuals who have adopted Mahāyānist ideas. Mahāyānists in the Pāla period regularly refer to themselves as *Śākya-bhikṣus* and occasionally as *paramopāsakas*, but that may reflect simply the predominance of support for Mahāyāna in the North-East at a later date – especially among those wealthy enough to make substantial donations. Essentially, it is dangerous to read back evidence from Pāla times to an earlier period and a different area.

Other explanations are equally possible. We might suppose that after the conflicts between Mahāyānists and non-Mahāyānists that seem to have taken place around the third century A.D. there was a reaction against sectarianism and it simply became less fashionable to refer to specific schools of origin. In that case it is likely that the term '*Śākya-bhikṣu*' simply reflects a wish to be known simply as a 'Buddhist monk' rather than by any kind of specific *nikāya* affiliation. Such a notion gains strong support from the Valabhī inscriptions which refer specifically to the eighteen *nikāyas*.

Schopen's thesis cannot then be sustained by the additional evidence he has put forward. Everything depends upon the donatory formula itself. This in fact was the earlier (and more cautious) position of Shizutani and Sarkar. And it is that which I now address.[58] But before doing so, it is necessary to be more clear as to what we mean by Mahāyānist.

In the second century A.D. we do not yet have anything which we can truly

call Mahāyāna Buddhism. We certainly have a literature to which the label Mahāyānist can be attached, but even that is to some extent retrospective. Some of the works which are later to be the core literature of the Mahāyāna certainly exist at this time, but in earlier recensions which do not contain all of the distinctive features of later Mahāyāna. This is clearly shown by studies of the earliest Chinese translations and by surviving portions in Sanskrit of earlier recensions. Although these works are certainly extant at an earlier date, they are not the literature of any kind of separate institution.

Rather they are a part of Mainstream Buddhism. That is to say a Buddhism, which is probably the ancestor of all subsequent forms of Buddhism, that recognizes in principle that there are three distinct possible goals of Buddhist practice. But there is no sense in which they are seen as in conflict; they are simply part of a menu of choices.

So typically in a larger Buddhist monastery we may suppose a wide range of options both for study and practice. This would include some of the various possibilities later included under the heading of Mahāyāna and many others that do not necessarily come under that rubric. Undoubtedly the larger part of the training and education of every monk would not be in any sense Mahāyānist. Just as there would be monks specializing in particular areas such as *vinaya* or *abhidhamma* or *jātaka* or other more specific forms of literature or preaching or meditational exercises or ascetic practices or various kinds of ritual and organizational necessities, so there would be monks specializing in particular types of literature or practice or philosophy which from a later perspective we might call Mahāyāna.

We might expect that individual monks would typically have learnt something of a range of these but the exact mix would be a matter of individual predilection. Smaller monasteries would offer a more restricted range depending upon the available personnel; no doubt this would partly depend on the fashions and interests of a given time and place. What happened at a village level is less clear. We know little about the smallest Buddhist monasteries in ancient India because they have not left much trace in the archaeological record. Nor do we know the extent of a peripatetic mendicant presence, although it seems reasonable to suppose that wandering Buddhist monks would be found throughout South Asia. We can however be sure that no monasteries existed in isolation from the lay community.

This pattern remains the norm for a very long time. It is just this kind of model which is described by the Chinese pilgrim Fa-hsien in the fifth century A.D. The difference is only that in certain areas and monasteries study of the Mahāyāna texts was not usual. Clearly at some point and in some areas a need was felt to call a halt to the new tendencies. Probably it was in the course of the third century A.D. that a measure of conflict arose between Mahāyāna and non-Mahāyāna. But those who continued to study and develop Mahāyāna literature and practices certainly did so in an environment where this was only one part of a much larger range of monastic activities. Of course it was an ever-increasing part and one

which eventually came to have a dominant role in the traditions developing in this way. But whether it had such a predominance in India much before the seventh century A.D. seems doubtful. Of course, it is in any case unlikely that developments occurred at the same speed in every part of the subcontinent.

If this model is correct, we cannot assume that because a gift is made to monks of a named school this is necessarily non-Mahāyānist. There is no reason to believe that any institutionally separate form of Mahāyāna existed in Kuṣāṇa or Gupta times. Every 'Mahāyāna' monk was certainly supposed to be ordained in one or more of the old *Vinaya* traditions and had undoubtedly learned and practised a great deal of standard Mainstream Buddhism.

## The donatory formula

The earliest inscriptions extant often have no dedicatory formula, simply referring to somebody's '*dānaṃ*'. In Kuṣāṇa times, however, the normal practice is to say that the donation is 'for the happiness and benefit of all beings' (*savva-satānaṃ hita-sukhāya* and similar). The compound '*hita-sukha-*' is unusual in the Pali Canon[59] and this exact expression is unknown in Pali literature, although *hita-sukha-* is quite frequent in the commentarial literature.[60] The sentiment, however, is normal enough. For example, the expression 'sympathetic to the benefit of all breathing and existent beings' (*sabba-pāṇa-bhūta-hitânukampin*) occurs nearly fifty times in the *Sutta-piṭaka*, usually in the context of keeping the first precept. In later canonical and in commentarial works there is also a tendency to refer to developing *mettā* to all beings (*sabbe sattā*, etc.).[61]

In effect then the formula as it occurs in Kuṣāṇa inscriptions represents a straightforward development of early Buddhist ideas. In apparent contrast, in post-Kuṣāṇa inscriptions we find a new formula: 'This is the donation of so-and-so. May all beings have the good fortune in this <act of giving> in order to attain supreme knowledge'[62] The second part can also be rendered 'May the good fortune in this <act of giving> conduce to the attaining of supreme knowledge by all beings'. (I avoid the translation of *puṇya/puñña* as merit for reasons I have given elsewhere.[63]) The first translation appears more likely in terms of the historical evolution of the formula – normally *puñña* is dedicated to beings, rather than for a purpose.[64] The second (preferred by Schopen) is perhaps more natural in terms of later Sanskritic style. Nonetheless, the first is almost certainly correct, given that when there is a shortage of space, 'in order to attain supreme knowledge' is sometimes omitted.[65] However, the formula is probably sufficiently ambiguous to be taken in different ways by different scribes and donors.

There are two elements here: the notion that all beings should benefit and the idea that they should or might attain supreme knowledge. It is likely that debates about the exact operation of the act of dedicating one's good fortune go back to an early date. Some sources try to restrict the benefit to *petas*. Clearly too, the idea that it is especially related to deceased parents or teachers has a long history. Moreover, the emphasis on all beings is already there in the Kuṣāṇa

version of the formula. While we might expect such a development to be attractive to Mahāyānists, it may long precede the formation of anything distinctively Mahāyānist. It is also true that we simply do not know the position of most of the early schools on this and related matters.

In any case, it is unlikely that ordinary Buddhists (and what would certainly include most Buddhist monks) would have paid much attention to theoretical issues here. Notably, dedication of *puñña* to all beings is not particularly rare in South-East Asian Buddhism today and this should not surprise us. After all, no-one seems to argue that dedicating merit to all beings is actually harmful and it seems a rather natural outflow of loving-kindness (*mettā*). (Schopen himself does of course clearly recognize that there is nothing specifically Mahāyānist about so-called merit-transference in itself.)

The second element concerns supreme knowledge. Whether or not this is evidence for the presence of the Mahāyāna depends on the exact force of the expression *anuttara-jñana* 'unsurpassed knowledge'. As a compound it occurs both for the wisdom of the arahat and for the wisdom of a Buddha.[66] So it is again probably sufficiently ambiguous to suit different purposes.

## In conclusion

We can summarize the results of this investigation as follows:

1 Leaving aside its earlier and occasional use to refer to a member of the Sakya clan or to the Buddha himself, the term *Śākya* or *Sakka* is found in dated texts and inscriptions from the third century A.D. and in a number of literary sources which are, or in some cases may be, earlier than that. It is found sporadically in a large number of later texts: in Jain lists of types of *samaṇa*, in Jain, Śaiva[67] and Nyāya critiques of Buddhist views, in a number of astrological texts – there is no indication in any of this that it has a reference to any specific type of Buddhism.

2 The more specific terms *Sakya-bhikkhu*, *Sākiya-bhikkhu* and *Śākya-bhikṣu* are found in several Pali texts, in an astrological work, in two dramatic works, a Nyāya philosophical work and a commentary on *Manu-smṛti* – again there is no reason to take it as referring to anything other than Buddhist monks in general.

3 It is clear that the use of the term *Śākya-* in this way develops naturally from the much earlier *Sakkaputtiya-*.

4 The term *paramopāsaka* does not have any specific reference to a particular type of Buddhism.

5 Therefore Schopen's additions to the thesis of Shizutani do not appear well-grounded.

6 None of this conclusively disproves either Shizutani's thesis i.e. that the donatory inscriptions are evidence of a distinct group who had adopted Mahāyāna or the alternative view that this was a group belonging to a

specific school such as the Sāmitīyas. Such a group could have chosen to identify themselves as simply 'Buddhist monks' but this thesis too cannot be regarded as firmly established on the basis of the available evidence.

7 We can at least say that if we are dealing with a specific group and this is far from clear, their intention was precisely not to identify themselves as belonging to any specific Buddhist tradition. We should respect their wish.

## Acknowledgment

Thanks are due to Richard Thomas, Peter Skilling and Csaba Dezsö for assistance on various points. Especial gratitude is due to Harunaga Isaacson for a number of additional references to Sanskrit texts and some helpful comments.

## Appendix

### *Inscriptions mentioning paramopāsaka in the later period*

Eighteen epigraphs are listed here. Ten are certainly Mahāyānist; several are fragmentary and may be Mahāyānist. None are certainly non-Mahāyānist, but most are from areas in or strongly influenced by the Pala territories where Mahāyāna predominates in this period.

*Orissa (Neulpur)*

| *Shizutani III* | *Schopen* | *donor information* | *dating* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 83 | | grandfather of king Śubhākara is referred to as '*paramopāsako*' | R.D. Banerji: 'latter half of the 8th century A.D.' |

*Uttar Pradesh (Sarnath)*

| *Shizutani III* | *Schopen* | *donor information* | *dating* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 101 | Sā i B(d)20 | *paramopāsa[ka]* | 11th century characters |
| 103 | Sā i B(e)10 | *[para]mopāsaka* | 11th century characters |
| 107 | Sā i B(e)1 | *paramopāsaka* | 11th or 12th century characters |
| 100 | Sā i B(d)13 | *<pa>ramopāsaka* Māgndhīya-śrī-Śāmaṅka | 11th century characters and sculpture |
| 99 | Sā iii | *°upāsaka/°upāsikā* | Kalachuri Era 810 |
| 112 | Sā iv 25 (p. 128) | *paramopāsikā* | ?Pāla period |

*Bengal and Madhya Pradesh*

| *Shizutani III* | *Schopen* | *modern state* | *donor information* | *dating* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Ben ii | Bengal (Belāśa, Tippera District) | *Mahāyāna-yāyina* paramopasaka Tśvara- | script of 10th–11th century |
| 19 | | (Kara) | Queen Śrī-Candalla-devī | ?10th century |
| 14 | MadP iii | Madhya Pradesh (Gopalpur, Jabalpur District) | *pravara-Mahā-jānānujāyi[naḥ] paramopāsaka-kāyastha-* | Nāgarī of the '11th or 12th century A.D.' |

*Bihar*

| *Shizutani III* | *Schopen* | *modern state* | *donor information* | *dating* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 57 | Bih iii 53 (pp. 238 & 247) | Kartihar[68] | *paramopāski* Mañju? | *Nāgarī* characters of the 9th to 11th centuries? |
| 68 | Bih iii 83 | Kartihar | *paramopāsaka-* Gopālahinokāyā?[69] | 11th century (acc. Banerji-Sastri) |
| 25 | Bih iii 5 | Kartihar | *pravara-Mahāyāna-jaina-pramopāsaka* | year 3 of Vigrahapāla (III?) |
| | Nā i | Bihar (Nālandā) | *paramopāsikā* Gaṅgūkā | palaeographically 'eighth or ninth' |
| P82 (p. 232) | Nā ii 29 | Nālandā | *pravara-Mahāyāna-yāyinaḥ paramopāsaka* Bālāditya | Mahīpāla (I?), year 11 |
| | Bih i c (pts 3–4, pp. 7–8) | Kāndī, Monghyr District | local prince Samudrāditya; his father, prince Nanda was a *pravara-Mahāyānānuyāyin paramopāsaka* | |
| | Bih ii p. 146 | Jaynagar, nr Lakhīsarāi, Monghyr District | Maharokā, wife of Santoṣa, a *pravara-Mahāyāna-yāyinyā[ḥ] paramopāsikā* | Sircar: Gauḍīya characters of around 12th century |
| 9 | | Bodhgayā | *pravara-Mahāyāna-yāyinaḥ paramopāsakasya* | Lakṣmaṇasena 74 or 73 (= 1182 A.D.?) |
| 125 | | Guneriya, Patna District | *paramopāsa-* | Mahendrapāla 9 |

## Notes

1 This article was initially stimulated by a paper given by Richard S. Cohen at the Spalding Symposium on Indian Religions, Oxford, 1999. It is now published: Cohen, Richard S., "Kinsmen of the Son: Śākyabhikṣus and the Institutionalization of the Bodhisattva Ideal," *HR* 40 (2000).

2 There are a few definitely pre-Kuṣāṇa inscriptions and a number that cannot be dated.

3 Shizutani, Masao, "On the Śākyabhikṣu as found in Indian Buddhistic Inscriptions," *JIBS* I, no. 2 (1953) (in Japanese); Shizutani, Masao, "Mahāyāna Inscriptions in the Gupta Period," *JIBS* X, no. 1 (1962).

4 BR s.v. *Śākya, Śākyabhikṣu* and *Śākyabhikṣukī.*

5 Shizutani, "Mahāyāna Inscriptions," p. 356.

6 Sarkar, H., *Studies in the Early Buddhist Architecture of India*, Delhi, 1966, pp. 106–8. The evidence on the basis of the names is not, however, very compelling.

7 Schopen, Gregory, "Mahāyāna in Indian Inscriptions," *I–IJ* 21 (1979).

8 Ibid., p.15.

9 Ja IV 219: *Te kaṭṭhāni bhinnānī ti idaṃ Satthā Jetavane viharanto thulla-kumārikā-palobhanaṃ ārabbha kathesi. Sāvatthi-vāsino kir' ekassa kulassa pannarasa-soḷasa-vass'-uddesikā dhītā ahosi sobhagga-ppattā, na ca naṃ koci vāresi. Ath' assā mātā cintesi: "mama dhītā vaya-ppattā, na ca naṃ koci vāreti. Āmisena macchaṃ viya etāya ekaṃ Sākiya-bhikkhuṃ palobhetvā uppabbājetvā taṃ nissāya jīvissāmī" ti.*

10 Kieffer-Pulz, Petra, *Die Sīmā. Vorschriften zur Regelung der buddhistischen Gemeindegrenze in älteren buddhistischen Texten*, Berlin, 1992, pp. 163–167 dates the composition of the *Vinaya commentary* to 386–87 A.D. But a date early in the fourth century cannot be ruled out. Compare also: Barua, B.M., "Buddhadatta and Buddhaghosa: Their Contemporaneity and Age," in *Corrections to Geiger's Mahāvaṃsa, etc.: A collection of monographs*, ed. Buddhadatta, Ambalangoda, 1957; Buddhadatta, A. P., *Corrections of Geiger's Mahavamsa, etc: A collection of monographs*, Ambalangoda, Ceylon, 1957.

11 Ap II 563 (cited Thī-a 105):

*samayaṃ taṃ vicintesiṃ, suvāno mānusaṃ karaṃ* ||
*chinnaṃ gayha samīpe me, pātayitvā apakkami.*
*Disvā nimittam alabhiṃ, hatthaṃ taṃ puḷavâkulaṃ.* ||
*Tato uṭṭhāya saṃviggā, apucchiṃ saha-dhammike.*
*Te avocuṃ; vijānanti, taṃ atthaṃ Sakya-bhikkhavo.* ||
*Sâhaṃ tam althaṃ pucchissaṃ, upetvā Buddha-sāvake.*
*Te mam ādāya gacchiṃsu, Buddha-seṭṭhassa santikaṃ.* ||

The story is translated: Pruitt, William, *The commentary on the verses of the Therīs (Therīgāthā-Aṭṭhakathā Paramatthadīpanī VI) by Ācariya Dhammapāla*, Oxford, 1998, p. 139ff.

12 This is a technical term for one of the mental objects of a type of meditation. Pruitt translates differently: "Seeing that sign, I received the hand that was full of maggots." This is grammatically possible, but does not make sense in the context of the story. We can take *hatthaṃ* as object of *disvā*, although against the order. Or, *hatthaṃ* and *nimittaṃ* may be in apposition or a double accusative. In the latter case, translate: "Seeing <that>, I received (apprehended) that hand full of maggots as a meditative object (*nimitta*)". This would be an early use of *nimitta* in this way, but that is not too problematic in one of the latest texts in the Canon. In the first four *Nikāyas*, we usually find: *puḷavaka-saññā-* (vll.), e.g. D III 226; S V 131f.; A I 42; II 17; V 106; 310; cf. Dhs §264; Paṭis I 49; 95. In the commentarial literature the uncompounded *puḷavaka-* (vl. *puḷu-*) becomes normal. See especially Vism.

13 Pṭ to Ps III 121; *Bhikkhū ti Sākiyā bhikkhū, maccha-maṃsa-khādanato nīlâbhijātī ti*

*vadanti. Ñāya-laddhe pi paccaye bhuñjamānā Ājīvaka-samayassa viloma-gāhitāya paccayesu kaṇṭake pakkhipitvā khādantī ti vadanti. Eke pabbajitā, ye savisesaṃ atta-kilamathānuyogam anuyuttā; tathā hi te kaṇṭake vattentā viya hontī ti kaṇṭaka-vuttikā ti vuttā.*

14 Sv-pṭ I 290 (= Spk-pṭ = Mp-ṭ): *Bhikkhū ti Buddha-sāsane bhikkhū.*

15 BS chap. 51, v. 21:

> *Śākyopādhyāyârhata-nirgranthi-nimitta-nigama-kaivartaiḥ/*
> *caura-camūpati-vaṇijām dāsī-yodhāpaṇastha-vadhyānām//*

(Kern read °*nirgrantha-*), Śvetāmbaras and Digambaras could also be meant here, but the reference is more probably to the distinction between grades of Jaina practice.

16 BS chap. 60, v. 19:

> *Viṣṇor Bhāgavatān, Magāṃś ca Savituḥ, Śambhoḥ sa-bhasma-dvijān,*
> *mātṝṇām api maṇḍala-krama-vido, viprān vidur brahmanaḥ, /*
> *Śākyān Sarva-hitasya śānta-manaso, nagnān Jinānāṃ vidur.*
> *Ye yaṃ devam upāśritāḥ sva-vidhinā tais tasya kāryā kriyā. //*

(Kern read: *mātṝṇām api mātṛ-maṇḍala-vido.*)

17 e.g. Kād 94f.: *Śākyamuni-śāsana-patha-dhaurayai raktapaṭaiḥ* (v.l. *rakta-pādaiḥ*); *Āgamaḍambara*: Chap. 1 between vv. 23 and 24 where the *snātaka* humorously addresses the Buddhist monk: *bho raktapaṭa*, Chap. 2 & 3 (I owe this reference to Csaba Dezsö who is preparing a new edition of this text); *Nyāyamañjarī*: NM I 145; 641; 647; *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*: BhP 4.19.25 (*upadharmeṣu nagna-rakta-paṭādiṣu*).

18 *Sarva-hitasya Buddhasya śānta-manaso jit'endriyasya Śākyān rakta-paṭān viduḥ.*

19 Pingree, David, ed., *Yavanajātaka of Sphujidhvaja*, Cambridge, Mass., 1978, Vol. II p. 312.

20 AS chap. 3, 20.16: *śākyājīvakādīn vṛṣala-pravrajitān deva-pitṛ-kāryeṣu bhojayataḥ śatya daṇḍah.*

21 ŚV: *Śabdanityatādhikaraṇa* 21cd: *Śākyasyâpi tv anaikântaḥ kṣaṇika-vyatirekibhiḥ* . . .

22 There are many further passages in later Sanskrit literature – too many to list here. As examples we can note: *Tattvasamīkṣā*: (TS: first *kāṇḍa*) *Śākyānāṃ kṣaṇikatve*; instructions for handling Buddhist and Jain monks on stage are given in the *Nāṭya-śāstra*: NS chap. 21 vv. 130 and 150; BhA: p. 51: *Sāṃkhyasamaya eṣa na Śākyasamayaḥ* and references to *Sakkia-samaṇa-* on pp. 9, 46 and 49; Helarāja: VP p. 106f.; NM I 9; 45; 75; 195; 202; 344; 492; 526; 537; 568; II 298; 312. There are a number of further occurrences in compounds in these and other texts, but I do not list those because there is sometimes ambiguity as to the meaning.

23 VA-bh 560:

> *Jati Jina-mataṃ pamāṇaṃ to, mā davv'-aṭṭhiyaṃ pariccayasu.* |
> *Sakkassa va hoti jato taṇ-ṇāse savva-ṇāso te* || (2901)

24 Malvania (ibid. n. 3) cites a subcommentary which glosses *Sakkassa* as = *Bauddhasya*.

25 ŚP 62:

> *para-pāṣaṃḍa-pasaṃsā Sakkâiṇam iha vanna-vāo u*
> *tehiṃ saha paricao jo sa saṃthavo hoi nāyavvo* (88).

See also p. 200 where the commentary to verse 200 refers to: *na Śākyâdy-upāsaka-dharme.*

26 Bollée, W.B., *Materials for an Edition and Study of the Piṇḍa- and Oha-nijjuttis of the Śvetâmbara Jain Tradition. Vol. II Text and Glossary*, Stuttgart, 1994, p. 26.
*Niggantha Sakka Tāvasa Geruya Ājīva pancahā samaṇā* (v. 445, *pādas* ab).

According to Mehta, Mohanlal and Chandra, K. Rishabh, *Āgamic Index, Vol. 1. Prakrit Proper Names*, Ahmedabad, 1970–72 (s.v. 1. *samaṇa*), this is cited in the *Niśītha-sūtra-bhāṣya* (v. 4420) and in ten other commentarial works. See also PU 298.

27 *Uttarādhyayana-cūrṇi*, p. 190 (1933). Further references in Mehta and Chandra, *op. cit.* (s.v. Sakka).

28 Somadeva (tenth century) in YT II 249: *Sugatakīrtinā Śākyena saha* and in UA pp. 3 and 95; vv. 55; 76; 174; 309; 804, Vidyānanda twice mentions the *Śākya-śāsana* (Sśp 27 and 29). See also Williams, Robert, *Jaina Yoga. A Survey of the Mediaeval Śrāvakacāras*, London, 1963 p. 46; Balbir, Nalini, "Jain-Buddhist Dialogue: Material from the Pāli Scriptures," *JPTS* XXVI (2000) p. 27 (*ratta-paḍa*) and n. 74.

29 *Valabhī-tala-sanniviṣṭa-Duḍḍāpāda-kārita-Duḍḍā-mahāvihāre nānā-dig-abhyāga-tâṣṭādaśanikāyâbhyantara-Śākyâryya-bhikṣu-saṃghāya grāsâcchādana-śayyâsana-glānapratyaya-bhaīṣajyâdy-upayogârttham* ... See Bühler, J.G., "A Grant of King Guhasena of Valabhī," *Ind. Ant.* IV, no. June (1875), revised in Barnett, Lionel D., "No. 30 — Wala Plate of Guhasena: the Year 246," *EI* XIII (1915–16).

30 *...yato 'sy'ocitayā Śākyâryya-bhikṣu-saṃgha-sthit[y]ā bhuṃjataḥ kṛṣataḥ ka[rṣaya]to vā na kaiścit pratiṣedhe varttitavyam āgāmi-bhadra-nṛpatibhiś câsmad-vaṃiśa-jair anityāny aiśvaryyāṇy asthiraṃ mānuṣyaṃ sāmānyaṃ ca bhūmi-dā[na]-phalam avagacchadbhir ayam asmad-dāyo 'numantavyaḥ paripālayitavyaś ca* ...

31 ... *nānā-dig-abhyāgatâṣṭādaśa-nikāyâbhyantarâryya-bhikṣu-saṃghāya grāsâcchā-dana- śayanâsana-glāna-bhaiṣajyâdy-kriy'otsarppaṇârttham*; see Bühler, G., "Grants from Valabhī," *Ind. Ant.* V, July (1876), p. 207.

32 Lüders, H., *Mathurā Inscriptions. Unpublished papers edited by Klaus L. Janert*, Göttingen, 1961, p. 172.

33 BS chap. 16, v. 14f.: *kośa-bhavanâgnihotrika-dhātvākara-Śākya-bhikṣu-caurāṇām.*

34 *Śākya rakta-paṭa(ka)ḥ bhikṣur yatiḥ*. Or, perhaps he intends to take *Śākya-* and *bhikṣu-* as separate items. In any case, it is unlikely that Varāhamihira meant that.

35 BS chap. 104, v. 61: *anyac ca tiktaṃ kaṭu-dravya-kūṭāhipāśārjita-svāḥ kumārā bhiṣak-Śākyabhikṣu-kṣapāvṛtti-kośeśa-* [vl. °*kauśeya-*] *śāṭhyāni si(d)dhyanti dambhās tathā.*

36 e.g. Ptolemy (2nd century A.D.) (Tetra 11 9), undoubtedly based upon older Greek sources.

37 Medhātithi (ninth century): *rakta-paṭa, nagna* and *carakas*, etc.; Govindarāja: *rak-tâmbarâdi.*

38 Bareau, A., "Trois traités sur les sectes bouddhiques attribués à Vasumitra, Bhavya et Vinītadeva. Première Partie," *JA* 242 (1954), p. 235 n.1; cf. SC p. 1 (cited from Cohen).

39 MVP 48ff.

40 NM 1 664: *Śākya-bhikṣavaḥ citta-vāsanāṃ dharmam ācakṣate*; II 344: *sarvathā Śākya-bhikṣūṇāṃ para-loko visaṃṣṭhulaḥ*; 461; 694.

41 ĀḌ chap. I (stage direction prior to v. 6): ... *rakta-paṭa-saṃvītaḥ Śākya-bhikṣur upāsakaś cāgrataḥ.*

42 Saṅghabh 186.

43 This corresponds to the Pali commentarial story of Udāyin(n)/Kāḷudāyi(n). We should note here that, as often, material corresponding to that given in the Pali commentaries is found in the text of the *Vinaya of the Mūlasarvāstivādins*. Gregory Schopen has defended the relative antiquity of this *Vinaya* as against the general perception of most scholars that it is later than the other extant *Vinayas*, e.g. Schopen, Gregory, "The Monastic Ownership of Servants or Slaves: Local or Legal Factors in the Redactional History of Two Vinayas," *The Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 17, no. 2 (1994). I do not find his arguments convincing. To

some extent, if I understand him correctly, his position is that the *Vinayas* generally were finalized at a somewhat later date than is usually supposed. Again I am not convinced. I would suppose that the *Vinaya of the Mūlasarvāstivādins* reached its present form at a rather late date. This of course does not mean that the components from which it was compiled are necessarily late. Nonetheless, if Schopen's position were to be accepted, then we should have to take the *Vinaya of the Mūlasarvāstivādins* as evidence for an early dating of some of the material in the Pali commentaries. But part of the story of Kāḷudāyi(n) is in any case quite old – cf. Th 57–36; Mvu iii 92f.; 107ff.

44 In canonical Pali *Sakka-* occurs in the singular apart from the locative plural form *Sakkesu* (found only in the *Parivāra* and the *ekaṃ samayaṃ* formula). *Sakya-* does not occur in the singular except once as a.v.l. The same is the case for *Sākiya* except for *Sākiyo* in the *Mahāvagga* (Vin I 71; 99) with one occurrence as a v.l. (Sn 423). But note the occurrence in verse of *Sākiyasmiṃ kule* (Ap II 573; 585), *Sākiye kule* (Ap II 589; 595; 602.) The form in compounds is usually *Sakya-*, apart from *Sākiy'-atraja* in Ap II 504, *Sākiya-sambhavā* (Ap II 592) and *Sākiyadāsakā* in Vin IV 181 f. *Sākiya-māno* at Vin II 183 is probably erroneous (cf. II 206).

45 The *Cūḷa-niddesa* offers three possible meanings for *Sakka*. 1. The Lord is a *Sakka* i.e. one who has gone forth from that clan. 2. *Sakka* (cf. *svaka*) means wealthy. The Lord is wealthy because he is rich in good qualities. 3. *Sakka* (i.e. < *śakra* √*śak*) means powerful and heroic, hence fearless. Nidd II 99: *Sakkā ti Sakko. Bhagavā Sakya-kulā pabbajito ti pi Sakko. Atha vā, aḍḍho mahad-dhano dhanavā ti pi sakko; tass' imāni dhanāni, seyyath'idaṃ – saddhā-dhanaṃ sīla-dhanaṃ hiri-dhanaṃ ottappa-dhanaṃ suta-dhanaṃ cāga-dhanaṃ paññā-dhanaṃ satipaṭṭhāna-dhanaṃ sammappadhāna-dhanaṃ iddhipāda-dhanaṃ indriya-dhanaṃ bala-dhanaṃ bojjhaṅga-dhanaṃ magga-dhanaṃ phala-dhanaṃ nibbāna-dhanaṃ. Imehi aneka-vidhehi dhana-ratanehi aḍḍho mahad-dhano dhanavā ti pi sakko. Atha vā, sakko pahu visavī alamatto sūro vīro vikkanto abhīrū acchambhī anutrāsī apalāyī pahīna-bhaya-bheravo vigata-loma-haṃso ti pi sakko.*

46 See Ousaka, Y., Yamazaki, M., and Norman, K.R., *Index to the Vinaya-piṭaka*, Oxford, 1996. Also in the recently discovered Baltimore Ms. of the *Dīrghâgama*: e.g. twice in the *Ambāṣṭha-sūtra* (folio 410): and once in the *Kūṭatāṃḍya-sūtra* (folio 401): *śramaṇo Gautamaḥ Śākya-putraḥ Śākya-kulāt keśa-śmaśrv avatārya kāṣāyāṇi vastrāṇy ācchādya samyag eva śraddhayā agārād anagārikāṃ pravrajitaḥ.*

47 The Index volume to the PTS edition (Ousaka, *op. cit.*) has 176 (including *asakkaput-tiya-*), but this is because Oldenberg's edition omits many repetitive passages.

48 The usage is also found in Sanskrit canonical material. See SHT Vol. I p. 11 (from an unidentified source): *śramaṇa Śakyaputrīyāṇāṃ* (twice) and six times in the *Jīvaka-sūtra* of the *Dīrghâgama* (folio 433f.). Occasionally also in later Sanskrit works: Abhidh-k-bh 102 & 466; in Siṃhasūri's (6th or 7th century) *Nyāyāgamānusāriṇī* (NĀ 93): *apratyakṣaṃ nīlâdi-viṣayaṃ cakṣurādi- vijñānaṃ Śākyaputrīyaṃ bhrānti-vid iti*; in the *Harṣacarita*: HC (a) p. 246 = (b) chap. 8, p. 79: *tena Śākyaputrīyena*; in the *Yuktidīpikā*: (early 8th century) YD 167.

49 This is typified by passages such as: *Bhagavato putto oraso mukhato jāto dhammajo dhamma-nimmito dhamma-dāyādo no āmisa-dāyādo*. We should perhaps also note such expressions as *Jina-putta* at Vin II 235; Bv II 76; X 12; XXIII 8; Dip V 1; 58; VII 49; Mhv LXXXXVIII 2937; Mil (12 occurrences); in the *aṭṭhakathā* literature (13 occurrences); Vin-vn 2951; Nett-ṭ 1; 355f.; Mil-*ṭ* to Mil 119. There can be no doubt that this usually means 'Buddhist monk'; *contra* Schopen, Gregory, *Bones, Stones, and Buddhist monks: Collected Papers on the Archaeology, Epigraphy, and Texts of Monastic Buddhism in India*, Honolulu, 1997, p. 109f. Similarly, *Buddha-putta* at Th p. 115 (concluding verse); Ap (four times); Mil (11 times); in the *aṭṭhakathā* (28

occurrences but some refer literally to Rāhula) and in later works. Also, *Sugataputtāna* at Nidd-a II 151. We would of course expect that just as the *Saṅgha* is properly the *ariyasaṅgha* but mostly in practice the *bhikkhu-saṅgha*, so too these two terms refer ideally to the *ariya* disciples whether monk or lay, but in practice to the monastic order who stand for that. This is explicit in the *ṭīkās*: Sv-pṭ II 418 = Ps-pṭ I 387 = Mp-ṭ I 258: *Yasmā Satthu-sāsane pabbajitassa pabbajj'-upagamena Sakyaputtiya-bhāvo sampajāyati, tasmā Buddha-putta-bhāvaṃ dassento: asambhinnāyā ti ādim āha.*

50 It is not found in the *Parivāra* nor in the *Abhidhamma-piṭaka*. In the *Khuddaka-nikāya* it is found only in Ud and once in Nidd I, in passages which are effectively cited from earlier works. Although it occurs many times in post-canonical Pali, most occurrences are no doubt citations from the earlier literature. However, it is possibly not seen so often in the very earliest canonical material.

51 Damsteegt, T., *Epigraphical Hybrid Sanskrit: its rise, spread, characteristics and relationship to Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit*, Leiden, 1978, p. 257; Skilling, Peter, "A Note on the History of the Bhikkhunī-sangha (II), The Order of Nuns after the Parinirvāṇa," *W.F.B. Review* XXX–XXXI (1993–4), n. 106 (and n. 10 which expresses scepticism as to whether *Śākya* indicates Mahāyānist).

52 Sircar, D.C., *Indian Epigraphical Glossary*, Delhi, 1966, p. 235ff. gives references to these and also for *parama-brāhmaṇya, parama-daivata, paramāditya-bhakta, parama-saura*, and *parama-vaiṣṇava*.

53 Richard Cohen reads: . . . *mocāsaka[sya]*: Cohen, Richard S., "Problems in the Writing of Ajanta's History: The Epigraphic Evidence," *I-IJ* 40, no. 2 (1997), p. 136.

54 Among the nineteen epigraphic occurrences of *paramopāsaka* in inscriptions from a later period (see Appendix), two are from the Munger (Monghyr) District of Bihar. This is the district identified by Skilling as the major Sāmitīya centre in later times. Skilling, Peter, "On the School-affiliation of the 'Patna Dhammapada'," *JPTS* XXIII (1997), p. 111f. Six more are again from Sarnath, while two are from Nālandā where Sāmitīya monks were almost certainly present.

55 HC (a) p. 237: *kapibhir api caityakaṃ kurvāṇals trayī-śaraṇa-paraiḥ paramopāsakaiḥ, śukair api Śākya-śāsana-kuśalaiḥ Kośam upadiśadbhiś ca . . . upāsyamānam*. The commentary glosses Śākya here as '*Buddhaḥ*'. Kane (HC (b) p. 73) has: *caitya-karma kurvāṇais tri-śaraṇaparaiḥ*.

56 Mil 15f. Otherwise, it is found around ninety times in the *aṭṭhakathā* literature and in later, but not earlier, works; cf. also *mahā-seṭṭhi*. Vjb 315 = Sp-ṭ III 57; *Mahā-upāsako ti geha-sāmiko*, Sv-pṭ II 349: *Ayañ ca nayo na kevalaṃ Sakkass' eva, atha kho Mahā-seṭṭhi-mahā-upāsikānam pi hoti yevā it dassento "Sakko deva-rājā" ti ādim āha.*

57 See Shizutani, Masao, *Indo Bukkyō himei mokuroku. (Catalogue of Indian Buddhist inscriptions)*, Kyoto, 1979 for most of these. For the Nepalese inscription: Gnoli, Raniero, *Nepalese inscriptions in Gupta characters*, Rome, 1956, p. 25 (on the base of an image of *Avalokiteśvara*).

58 Schopen revises his position on the formula slightly. See: Schopen, *Bones, Stones*, p. 32f.; 36ff. and nn.; 161, n.1; 202, n.97; 250nn.: 27 ln.; and Schopen, G., "The Inscription on the Kuṣān Image of Amitābha and the Character of the Early Mahāyāna in India," *JIABS* 10, no. 2 (1987), pp. 120ff.

59 But cf. Sn 683; the 'Bodhisatta . . . has been born in the human world for their happiness and benefit' (*manussa-loke hita-sukhatāya*; B 'has *hita-sukh'-atthāya*) and D III 153f. (*Mahālakkhaṇa-suttanta*).

60 But compare: Vism 325: *tesaṃ hita-sukhāya avicalâdhiṭṭhānā honti*; cf. It-a 191; Cp-a 309; *sabbam etaṃ yathā-vuttaṃ dāna-sampadaṃ sakala-loka-hita-sukhāya pariṇāmeti*; Ras 192; *tesaṃ kulānaṃ hita-sukhāyā ti nimantevā* with several further

passages in the *ṭīkās*.

61 Notably Paṭis II 130–135; cf. Vin II 110 = A II 73 = Ja II 144–8 (*Khaṇḍa-jātaka*); Sn 145 (147) = Kh 8; plus additional passages with *sabba-satta-*.

62 *Deya-dhar(m)mo 'yaṃ ... Yad atra puṇyaṃ tat bhavatu sarv(v)a-satvānaṃ* (or *sakala-satvānaṃ) anuttara-jñānāvāptaye*.

63 See: Cousins, L.S., "Good or Skilful? Kusala in Canon and Commentary," *JBE* 3 (1996).

64 I prefer not to refer to transference, as the donor does not lose anything. Rather the converse in fact; he gains yet more *puñña*.

65 Cohen, "Kinsmen of the Son," p. 30, n. 68 gives six examples from Ajaṇṭā.

66 (of a Buddha) Ps-pṭ II 6: *anañña-sādhāraṇa-puññânubhāva-nibbatto anuttara-ñāṇâhigama-laddha-purāvattako ca Bhagavato rūpa-kāyo*; (of an *arahat*) Pm-vn v.1043: *tattha cânuttara-ñāṇaṃ, saccānaṃ paṭivedhakaṃ, samuccheda-ppahānena klesânusaya-sodhanaṃ*; cf. Pv-a 230: *Jutimā ti anuttarāya ñāṇa-jutiyā jutimā*. Apart from *ñāṇa*, *anuttara* occurs most often in relation to a Buddha, but quite often also in relation to an *arahat* or the goal. In *abhidhamma* it is defined: Dhs §1300: *Katame dhammā anuttarā? Apariyāpannā maggā ca, magga-phalāni ca, asaṅkhatā ca dhātu – ime dhammā anuttarā*, and §1614 *Katame dhammā anuttarā? Cattāro maggā apariyāpannā, cattāri ca sāmañña-phalāni, nibbānañ ca – ime dhammā anuttarā*.

67 For the use of Sākkiyar in Tamil Śaiva literature to refer to Buddhists, see Nilakanta Sastri, N.A., "An Episode in the History of Buddhism in South India," in *B.C.Law Volume*, ed. D.R. Bhandarkar and others, Calcutta, 1945, Vol. 1 pp. 35–49; Vasudeva Rao, T.N., *Buddhism in the Tamil country, Annamalainagar*, 1979, pp. 207–249; Schalk, Peter and Vēluppiḷḷai, Āḷvāpiḷḷai, *Buddhism among Tamils in Pre-Colonial Tamiḷakam and Iḷam*, Uppsala, 2002, pp. 75; 452.

68 Sixteen miles east of Gayā.

69 A donation was made by the same person in the year 32 of Rājyapāla.

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YJ: *Yavanajātaka* of Sphujidhvaja. Edited by David Pingree, 2 vols, Harvard Oriental Series 48. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978.

YT: *Yaśastilaka* of Somadeva. Edited by Paṇḍit Śivadatta and Kâśînâth Pâṇḍurang Parab with the Commentary of Śrutadeva Sūri, 2 vols, Kāvyamālā Series 70. Bombay: Tukârâm Jâvajî, 1901–3.

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# 34

# A PRELIMINARY STUDY ON MEDITATION AND THE BEGINNINGS OF MAHĀYĀNA BUDDHISM

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## 1. Preliminary remarks

Before stepping into the labyrinth of Buddhist meditation and the beginnings of Mahāyāna, a few words about the origins of this paper will shed some light on its aims and, more important, on its limitations. The cause 'to blame' for this very preliminary study[1] goes back to the kind invitation received from Professor Paul Harrison to contribute to a panel on early Mahāyāna and Mahāyānasūtras at the 12th Conference of the International Association of Buddhist Studies (Lausanne, 1999). The subject chosen is related to a long-standing (predominantly theoretical) interest in meditation as well as to the arch-question tormenting so many students of Indian Buddhism: the birth of Mahāyāna. This paper attempts to discuss the relationship between the two. The first part of the article is mainly dedicated to one technical aspect of meditation which seems to have played a crucial role in early Mahāyāna: the meanings of *samādhi* and its intricate connections with *dhyāna(pāramitā)*. The discussion is largely limited to the *Prajñāpāramitā* corpus and, more or less, related texts. The survey is, unfortunately, far from being exhaustive and not backed up by extensive philological work. The second part of the article, which deals with the rise of the Great Vehicle movement and the role of the spiritual cultivation in this process, admittedly indulges in building up a largely speculative hypothesis. I must confess from the beginning that the relation between the two parts of my article is not one of strict implication. What I say in the first part of the paper is not a direct and definitive proof of the scenario put forward in its second part. It is, nevertheless, one of the many pieces needed to reconstruct the *Sitz im Leben* of spiritual cultivation and its role in the rise of Mahāyāna. The hypothesis formulated in

relation to the origins of the Great Vehicle is, admittedly, not dramatically new and is far from taking into account the multitude of facets involved in this process. Even if this modest attempt fails in putting forward a convincing narrative concerning the beginnings of Mahāyāna, there will always remain the consolation that it may succeed in adding a few more questions and doubts regarding this intricate historical problem.

I must thank Professor Harrison not only for giving me the chance to join his panel but also for having 'interrupted my dogmatic slumber'[2] with his challenging hypothesis on the central role of the ascetic monks in the birth of the Great Vehicle:

> Far from being the products of an urban, lay, devotional movement, many Mahāyāna *sūtras* give evidence of a hard-core ascetic attempt to return to the original inspiration of Buddhism, the search for Buddhahood or awakened cognition.
>
> (Harrison 1995, 65)

Previous to my encounter with this essay, my understanding had been under the spell of Akira Hirakawa's theories which stress the pivotal role played by laity in the formation of Mahāyāna Buddhism (cf., for instance, Hirakawa 1974, vol.1, pp. 326–352; 1990, vol.2, pp.443–501).[3] The ascetic-centrality hypothesis put forward by Harrison was not only new and stimulating but it also prompted me to start looking at this possibility from another angle. If ascetic communities were behind many of the early Mahāyāna sutras, then these sources should contain substantial material on spiritual cultivation (*bhāvanā*). What is then the meditation the early *bodhisattvas* practised or, at least, expounded in their scriptures? How different was it from the Śrāvakayāna tradition? Such an investigation could eventually shed light on the beginnings of the Great Vehicle. If not proper light, which is almost hopeless in the history of Indian Buddhism, then we should be content even with a dim glow. There is no doubt that this historical process must have been very complex, and an overall picture of the multiform religious phenomenon called Mahāyāna should take into account far more data and perspectives. Gregory Schopen's description of early Mahāyāna as 'a loose federation of a number of distinct though related cults' (Schopen 1975, 181) appears to be justifiably becoming a classical definition.[4] Actually, even Hirakawa's theories, the trendiest target of the critics of the laity-centrality hypothesis, are far from being simple, and a number of his findings and insights retain, I believe, their persuasive power.

Before tackling these problems, we need to clarify our historical and textual background. Early Mahāyāna refers here to the period between the 1st century BCE and the 5th century CE. Following Shizutani (1974, 274) and Nakamura (1980, 152), I also use the term proto-Mahāyāna, roughly covering the age between 100 BCE and 100 CE, to describe the transitional and incipient stage of the movement. In choosing the 5th century as the *terminus ante quem* of early

Mahāyāna, I am largely indebted to Gregory Schopen's findings. In an excellent lecture delivered at Otani University (Kyoto) in 1996[5], Schopen convincingly argued that most of the earliest epigraphic evidence of Mahāyāna dates back to the 5th/6th centuries. Before this time[6] and even during this period the Great Vehicle appears to have been a geographically and institutionally marginal presence in India (Schopen 1996, 13–14). The emergence of Mahāyāna as 'a clearly identifiable named group having its own monasteries' coincides with the decline and eventual disappearance of inscriptional references to the old Mainstream monastic orders (Schopen 1996, 15).[7] The 5th century as the *terminus ante quem* of this period also tallies with the history of Buddhist thought. This is the age when Asaṅga and Vasubandhu (or the authors and redactors going under their names) roughly finalise the systematisation of the Yogācāra philosophy. Their work also sets the tone of the predominantly epistemological and logical trend, which aside from the Tantric developments, is to characterise the next seven or eight centuries of Buddhist doctrinal history in India.

Turning now to philological details, most of the texts discussed here come from the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature and related Mahāyāna sutras. This does not mean that I have covered the whole of the discouragingly voluminous *Prajñāpāramitā* corpus which amounts to no less than 40 works (cf. Conze 1978), and, no doubt, runs for thousands and thousands of pages. The term 'related Mahāyāna sutras' is, admittedly, not well-defined but it refers here to texts like the *Samādhirāja-sūtra, Śūraṁgamasamādhi-sūtra*, etc. Except a few remarks, I shall not touch upon meditation in works like the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, Pure Land scriptures, visualisation sutras, etc., which, as explained below, are based on different approaches and understanding of what spiritual cultivation is.

Now, how far back in time do our texts actually take us? Our earliest solid evidence starts with the Chinese translations of Mahāyāna scriptures in the second half of the 2nd century CE. Any conjecture bearing on a period before this date cannot aspire to reach definitive certainty. Our attempts to put together a plausible jigsaw of apparently disparate events and data are undoubtedly fraught with many questionable inferences, but they, nevertheless, remain our sole way of saying something meaningful about the proto-Mahāyāna period. As long as it retains the caution and modesty required by hypothetical judgement, higher criticism continues to be, I believe, preferable to blind acceptance of tradition or complacent scepticism concerning historical reconstruction.

Though I often employ Sanskrit materials, I am aware that the Mss on which our modern editions are based are often very late.[8] The extant Sanskrit version of the *Aṣṭa* appears to reflect the redactional development of the text between approximately 645 (Xuanzang's return to China) and 800 (the probable date of Haribhadra's compilation of his *Commentary*) (Kajiyama 1974, vol.2, p.345). Fortunately, it was one of the first Buddhist scriptures to be rendered into Chinese, and it represents the earliest attested stage of a *Prajñāpāramitā* text. Usually known under the title of *Dao xing (boruo) jing* 道行(般若)經, in 10 *juan* 卷, it is almost unanimously attributed by traditional sources and modern schol-

ars[9] to the Indo-Scythian Lokakṣema. A colophon gives us the exact date of the completion of its translation as 26 October 179 CE (cf. Harrison 1993, 141–144). Careful philological research has revealed that the *Aṣṭa* is the oldest *Prajñāpāramitā* sutra. It has also been surmised that the first two chapters (Conze 1968) or its first chapter (Kajiyoshi 1980) represent the original nucleus out of which the text evolved.[10]

The Sanskrit Ms of Recension A of the *Ratnaguṇa* is actually as late as 1174 (Yuyama 1976, X X IIIff.; Conze 1960, 37). The *Fo shuo fo mu bao de zang boruoboluomi jing* 佛說佛母寶德藏般若波羅蜜經, in 3 *juan*, the Chinese version of the text is of little help in this case, since it was translated by Faxian 法賢 in 991.[11] In spite of our lack of Ms evidence, the *Ratnaguṇa* appears to belong to the earliest strata of *Prajñāpāramitā* literature. Conze (1994, X) considers that the first two chapters of this work represent the original *Prajñāpāramitā* dating back to 100 BCE.[12] According to him, 'the 41 verses of the first two chapters [of the *Ratnaguṇa*] constitute the original *Prajñāpāramitā* which may well go back to 100 B.C.' (Conze 1994, X).[13] At our present level of knowledge it seems impossible to prove or disprove Conze's view in a definitive way, but it can be justifiably regarded as a plausible conjecture.[14] Though standing on the quicksand of the higher criticism, my working hypothesis here is that the first two chapters of the *Ratnaguṇa* and the *Aṣṭa* respectively represent the earliest strata of the *Prajñāpāramitā* corpus and, most probably, of the whole Mahāyāna literature. I have, therefore, paid special attention to these fragments in my examination of the spiritual cultivation and the rise of Mahāyāna.

The textual history of the *Pañca* and the *Śata* is far more complicated. According to Kajiyoshi (1980), the *Pañca* lineage developed not as a mere enlargement of the *Aṣṭa* but rather as a commentary (*upadeśa*) attempting to solve from its own peculiar perspective doctrinal points in the *Aṣṭa*.[15] This process culminated in the compilation of the huge *Śata* (Kajiyoshi 1980, 112–114; 723–727).

This is not the place to discuss in detail the textual history of all the scriptures quoted in this paper. A final word on the *Da zhi du lun* 大智度論 (**Prajñāpāramitopadeśa*)[16], which is much used in this paper, appears, however, to be necessary. The decision to refer to this treatise here may raise some complicated methodological problems.

First, the virtual silence of the Indian tradition in regard to the *Prajñāpāramitopadeśa* may cast doubt on its reliability for our discussion. Despite the traditional attribution and some modern views supporting it (see, for instance, Hikata (1958) and Yinshun (1993)), it is very unlikely that the author of the *Prajñāpāramitopadeśa* is Nāgārjuna. Lamotte (1944–1976), vol. 3, pp. VIII–XLIV) shows, quite convincingly, I believe, that the author[17] must have been a Buddhist scholar 'of Sarvāstivādin formation and Mahāyāna conviction' active in Northwest India at the beginning of the 4th century.[18] The silence of the later Mādhyamika tradition might be explained by the relatively limited geographical transmission of the text in Northwest India and Central Asia which was followed by its early loss and fall into oblivion.

Second, is it historically justifiable to lump together a (relatively) late *śāstra* with the *sūtra* tradition? We have already seen that the *Pañca* and the *Śata* may have actually developed, partially, at least, as exegetically motivated texts. In a brilliant recent contribution, Stefano Zacchetti (1999)[19] has shown that at least some passages in the *Prajñāpāramitopadeśa* seem to be linked to the same commentarial tradition which produced the *Pañca* and the *Śata*. This is a very important finding relevant not only to the present discussion but also to the entire history of the *Prajñāpāramitā* corpus.[20] The author's point, convincingly supported by a number of illustrations, can be summed up as follows:

> During an analysis of the Pañca, where the first seven chapters of the Chinese translations (esp. DWK [i.e. Dharmarakṣa's, Wu Chaolu's, and Kumārajiva's translations respectively]) were compared with the corresponding Sanskrit versions (especially Pañca-D [i.e. Dutt's edition] and the *Śata*), I found that, in a number of cases, textual expanded readings, as transmitted in the Sanskrit against DWK(X) [X= Xuanzang's translation], were directly anticipated by the DZDL [i.e. *Da zhidu lun*]. (p.2)
>
> My hypothesis is that they [i.e. these passages] probably were not composed by the author of the DZDL (whoever he was): rather they very likely represent a certain generic exegetical tradition handled down (perhaps orally [...]) along with the *sūtra*, and, by chance, partially collected in the DZDL . . . (p.8)
>
> (The explanations or additions in the square brackets belong to me.)

Obviously, not the entire *Prajñāpāramitopadeśa* can be linked to this exegetical tradition[21], and many passages undoubtedly represent the creative work of its final author(s). At the present sate of our knowledge it is very hard, if not impossible, to make distinctions between, on the one hand, tradition-handed views reflecting an early doctrinal stage, maybe close to the formation period of texts like the *Āṣṭa*, the *Pañca*, etc. and, on the other hand, late commentarial developments. Nevertheless, the *Prajñāpāramitopadeśa* remains a very useful tool when dealing with the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature and philosophy. It is my working hypothesis here that this commentary provides not only much needed clarifications but it may, at least occasionally, reflect earlier exegetical traditions. With this proviso in mind, I think that the *Prajñāpāramitopadeśa* can still be used in our discussion on meditation in the early *Prajñāpāramitā* texts.

## 2. *Dhyāna and samādhi* in the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature

What kind of meditation did the early Mahāyāna *bodhisattvas* practise? It is very risky to generalise, especially after a preliminary exploration of the sources, but I shall, nevertheless, venture to say a few words about the spiritual cultivation in general in the early Great Vehicle. Although Śrāvakayāna and Mahāyāna share a basic common heritage of meditative practices and ideas, differences between

the two traditions cannot be denied. The distinctively Mahāyāna innovations apparently evolved into two main directions.

On the one hand, we have basically traditional Śrāvakayāna meditative practices which are reinterpreted in the light of the Prajñāpāramitā relativism, with special emphasis on the idea of practising without a support and the complete negation of attachment to rapture.[22] The ideal is a state of emptiness (*śūnyatā*), signlessness (*ānimitta*), and directionlessness (*apraṇihita*).[23] This is mainly characteristic of the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature and will form the object of my inquiry here. Despite the plethora of *samādhis*, some of them presumably actual concentration methods or states, some of them emblematic names for doctrinal goals, the main innovative effort of this trend was not directed towards the creation of new meditative techniques. Its chief contribution rather appears to lie in a new hermeneutic approach towards the spiritual cultivation. The most important point here is not what a *bodhisattva* practises, and usually he works with traditional methods and categories[24], but how he practises, to be more precise, how he practises without practising.[25]

On the other hand, we have visualisation sutras mainly, but not exclusively, associated with the Pure Land Buddhism.[26] I would venture to speculate that this trend originated in technical elaborations upon the various psychological signs (*nimitta*) obtained in meditation coupled with a strongly devotional form of Buddha recollection (*buddhāmusmṛti*). At the risk of being schematic in the extreme, we could say that the Prajñāpāramitā stream emphasised the *ānimitta* aspect as its main spiritual practice and goal while the visualisation sutras developed and idealised the *nimitta* aspect as the key to attaining the Buddhist *summum bonum*. Of course, this is a theoretical simplification and in reality we have a variety of positions. The relativist Prajñāpāramitā current is far from being devoid of visualisation and devotional passages. One of the main results and aims of the *bodhisattva*'s meditation is gaining direct access to countless Buddha lands (*buddha-kṣetra*) and worshipping each of their Buddhas. At the other extreme of the spectrum, a visualisation sutra like the *Amitāyurbuddhadhyāna-sūtra* teaches that the contemplation of the Pure Land leads to the attainment of the patient acceptance of the non-arising of phenomena (*anutpattika-dharmakṣānti* 無生法忍, T12.341c22). A case in between, one is almost tempted to say a category in itself, is the *Pratyutpannasamādhi-sūtra*. After a description of a what appears to be a visualisation technique (T13.904b–905c; Harrison 1978, 21(section 2D)-36 (section 3L)), the Lord tells Bhadrapāla that the Tathāgatas seen in *samādhi* are nothing but mental products because things appear as we imagine them (*'di ltar bdag ji lta ji ltar rnam par rtog pa de lta de ltar snang ngo*) (Harrison 1978, 36(section 3L)). The thought itself is declared to have no substantial existence (*dngos po med pa=*abhāva*) (Harrison 1978, 36–7(section 3M)).[27]

There is no doubt that the *Prajñāpāramitā* sutras show a great degree familiarity with the traditional meditation techniques and the framework of the spiritual path (see, for instance, *Aṣṭadaśa*, vol. 2, pp. 19–21; *Pañca*, 203–210; etc.).

As mentioned above, the basic novelty lies in their interpretation. Chapter 1, verses 9–10, of the *Ratnaguṇa* (pp. 10–11) can be said to represent the archetype of the Prajñāpāramitā treatment of meditation both in terms of chronology and philosophical approach. On the one hand, concentration is not denied and is held to play an important psychological role. The *bodhisattva* with his mind set on nonproduction experiences the most excellent of the tranquil concentrations (*anupādu-dhīḥ spṛśati śānta-samādhi śreṣṭhām*. Verse 10). Dwelling pacified in himself, he receives his prediction of Buddhahood from the previous Tathāgatas (*evātma-śānta viharann iha bodhisattvo, so vyākṛto purimakehi tathāgatehi*. Verse 11). On the other hand, his knowledge of the highest truth of the emptiness of all phenomena makes him non-dependant upon concentration. The *bodhisattva* does not mind whether he is in or out of concentration because he knows perfectly the *dharma*-original nature (*na ca manyate ahu samāhitu vyutthito vā, kasmārtha dharma-prakṛtiṁ parijānayitvā*. Verse 11).

We find the same philosophical and psychological role assigned to meditation in the first chapter of Lokakṣema's Chinese translation of the *Aṣta*:

> For the *bodhisattva mahāsattva*, all designations and phenomena are not grasped.[28] Therefore, [this] *samādhi* (**sarvadharmānupādāno nāma samādhiḥ*)[29] is infinite and beyond measure.[30] It cannot be known by *arhats* and *pratyekabuddhas*.[31] Those *bodhisattvas mahāsattvas* who follow this *samādhi* will quickly obtain Buddhahood.[32]
>
> By Buddha's magnificent power, Subhūti thus spoke: 'All *bodhisattvas* who have attained the stage of non-regression (**avivartika*)[33] and have obtained [the prediction of] reaching Buddhahood from the Buddhas of the past follow this *samādhi*, but they do not perceive [this] *samādhi*, do not conceive of [this] *samādhi*, do not practise [this] *samādhi*, do not think of [this] *samādhi*, do not wish to sit in [this] *samādhi*, and do not say "[this is] my *samādhi*." He who follows this *dharma* [i.e. way of practice] will have no doubts.'[34]
>
> 菩薩摩訶薩一切字法不受。是故三昧無有邊無有正。諸阿羅漢辟支佛所不能及知。菩薩摩訶薩隨三昧者疾得作佛。持佛威神、須菩提説是語：“菩薩皆得阿惟越致字、前過去佛時得作佛、隨三昧亦不見三昧、亦有無三昧想、亦不作三昧、亦不念識三昧、亦不想識坐三昧、亦不言我三昧。已隨是法者無有疑。.”
>
> (T8.426c 18–25)

Apparently at an early date, Mahāyāna authors subsumed the traditional practice of trances (*dhyāna*), attainments (*samāpatti*), etc. under the perfection of meditation (*dhyānapāramitā*).[35] It is possible that, as Hirakawa suggests, in the earliest stages of Mahāyāna the six perfections were regarded as equal[36], but even the oldest *Prajñāpāramitā* texts already regard the *dhyānapāramitā* as well as the other perfections as subordinated to and contained in the *prajñāpāramitā*

(*Aṣta(M)*, 81; cf. also 310). To be sure, the role of the perfection of meditation is not denied, and the *Prajñāpāramitopadeśa* (T25.180b) declares that the power of *dhyāna* can help the *bodhisattva* swallow the medicine of *prajñā*. A careless practice of meditation, however, can have disastrous effects for the *bodhisattva*'s career. The greatest concern is that spiritual practices, especially those of an enstatic nature, like *dhyānas* and *samāpattis*, can seriously preclude the *bodhisattva* from achieving his noble cause of universal salvation. Not only that *dhyāna* is a solitary and self-centred practice but it also determines the sphere of the practitioner's future rebirth, which, for the proficient meditatator, will automatically be outside the realm of desire (*kāmadhātu*). The *bodhisattva* must, therefore, master the *dhyānas* and *samāpattis* without receiving their usual karmic fruit (*Aṣta(M)*, 332; 427; *Aṣṭadaśa*, vol1, pp.94–5; 100). He acquires the perfection of meditation entering the nine successive states of attainment but 'he does not cling to the level of *śrāvakas* or *pratyekabuddhas*, and he [practises meditation thinking], "Having stood in the perfection of concentration, I must now liberate all beings from the cycle of rebirths" ' (*na ca śrāvakabhūmiṁ vā pratyekabuddhabhūmiṁ adhyālambate. anyatrāsyaivam bhavati. iha mayā samādhipāramitāyāṁ sthitvā sarvasattvā saṁsārāt parimocayitavyā iti. Aṣṭadaśa*, vol1, pp.94–5).

The author of the *Prajñāpāramitopadeśa*, in a passage listing eighteen characteristics of the Mahāyāna *dhyānapāramitā* (T25.187c–190a), appears to be very eager to prove that despite its enstatic aspects and periods of seclusion required by its practice, the *bodhisattva*'s meditation is an efficient method and integral part of the great being's messianic mission. To give only two examples here, the *bodhisattva* practises meditation in order to teach the inner bliss of *dhyāna* and *samāpatti* to those beings attached to exterior pleasures (T25.187c). He practises 'the **bodhisattva-dhyāna* which does not forsake the living beings' 不捨衆生菩薩禪 and 'in *dhyāna* he always generates thoughts of great compassion (*mahākaruṇā-citta*) 禪中皆發大悲心 (T25.188a6–7). In order to make friendliness and compassion possible in a practice dominated by enstatic states, the *Prajñāpāramitopadeśa* operates a technical innovation inconceivable from the viewpoint of the traditional Śrāvakayāna doctrine. 'The *bodhisattva* practising the *dhyānapāramitā* enters the successive *dhyāna* stages with thoughts of the realm of desire (*kāma-dhātu*) 菩薩行禪波羅蜜。於欲界心次第入禪。' (T25.188b3–4). This opens the way for extravagant displays of the psychological virtuosity of blending trance-states and active preaching. 'The *bodhisattva* always dwells in the *dhyāna*, concentrates his thoughts, remains unmoved, does not generate coarse observation (*vitarka*) and subtle examination (*vicāra*) and [yet] at the [same] time he preaches the Dharma with countless voices to all living beings in the ten directions and liberates them. 爾時菩薩常入禪定。攝心不動不生覺 觀。亦能為十方一切衆生以無量音聲説法而脱之。. '(T25.188c9–11)[37]

The *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa* goes as far as to declare that the correct practice of solitary meditation (*pratisaṁlīna*) is not withdrawing from the attainment of cessation (**nirodhasamāpatti*)[38] and yet displaying ordinary behaviour.[39] (Chinese

translation: 不起滅定而現諸威儀。是為宴坐。. T14.539c21–22, T14.561b14–15[40]; Tibetan translation: *ji ltar 'gog pa*[41] *las kyang mi ldang zhing spyod lam kun tu yang snang bar 'gyur ba de ltar nang du yang dag gzhag par gyis shig* | P34.Bu190a4)

Let us now see what our texts have to tell about *samādhi*, one of the new leading 'stars' in Mahāyāna literature. In terms of spiritual cultivation, the attainment of the unsurpassed perfect Awakening (*anuttara-samyak-saṁbodhi*) is, presumably, neither a simple intellectual act of understanding nor a complete self-abandon to enstatic states. For the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature authors, it was a matter of paramount importance that wisdom should lead and control all the other perfections. Alongside innovations in defining the nature of *dhyāna*, they elaborated upon and reinterpreted another old spiritual alley. The four *dhyānas*, the core of the *dhyānapāramitā*, are considered to include all other aspects of spiritual cultivation: the five supernatural powers (*abhijñā*), the four states of mental sameness (*sammacitta*), the eight deliverances (*vimokṣa*), the ten totalities (*kṛtsnāyatana*), the *bodhisattva's samādhis* 諸菩薩三昧, amounting to 108 or 120 varieties, etc. (*Prajñāpāramitopadeśa*, T25.185b; 187c). Amongst all these practices, it seems that early Mahāyāna chose to stress particularly *samādhi* as the ideal form of spiritual cultivation or cognitive perfection. To start with, the term was polysemic even in the early Canon[42], and its wide semantic sphere must have served perfectly well the creative purposes and, probably, the psychological experimentation of the Prajñāpāramitā followers. Furthermore, it was an ideal term related both to *dhyāna* and *prajñā*.

The popularity of *samādhi* in the Great Vehicle[43] is witnessed by the impressive number of concentrations as well as sutras dedicated to them. The most popular and well-defined ones appear to be the three concentrations which will be dealt with below. The number of *samādhis* varies from 58 (*Aṣṭa(M)*, 490–2) to 108 (*Pañca*, 142–4 and 198–203)[44], 115 (*Śata*, 825–835), 118 (*Mahāvyutpatti*, 40–49, under the heading *prajñāpāramitodbhavita samādhi nāmāni*), 121 (*Śata*, 1412–1426), etc.[45] The poetic frenzy of the sutras often made the number acquire hyperbolic digits. Other passages in the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature mention hundreds of thousands (T8.1a26; T8,217a28) or millions of *samādhis* (T8.842b3). The *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* (p. 424)[46] speaks of hundreds of thousands of *koṭis* of *samādhis* equal to the sands of the Ganges. The *Prajñāpāramitopadeśa* explains 14 representative *śamādhis* (T25.268b–c) and then declares their number infinite 無量 (T25.268c). Do we have here a process of gradual growth from a relatively limited number of concentrations to hyperbolic digits? As with many other processes of historical development, we can certainly assume that a gradual enlargement took place, but, on the other hand, the Śrāvakayāna tradition does not lack completely the rhetoric of astronomic numbers. The *Mahāvibhāṣā*, for instance, says that 'if one classifies according to continuity (**saṁtāna*) and momentariness (**kṣaṇa*), then there is an infinite number of *samādhis*.' 若以相續剎那分別、則有無量三摩地。. (T27.538a26–7). It is, however, difficult to draw conclusions as to whether our Mahāyāna texts were

influenced by an Abhidharmic tradition or we have to deal here with a completely independent growth.[47]

Whatever the origin of the infinite number of concentrations may be, more important for our discussion here is to consider whether these *samādhis* actually refer to specific meditative techniques. The texts are not very clear and generous in details. It appears, however, that apart from some well-attested methods, many of these *samādhis* represent rather stylistic devices stressing the fact that the apprehension of the most profound aspects of reality, must be connected with a state of concentration.[48] The *Samādhirāja-sūtra* lists hundreds of qualifications and merits of 'the *samādhi* that is manifested as the sameness of the essential nature of all *dharmas*' (*sarva-dharma-svabhāva-samatā-vipañcita-samādhi*)[49], but there is no clearly identifiable meditative technique which can be singled out as this particular *samādhi*. The word appears to denote a 'cognitive experience of emptiness' covering a wide variety of senses, including the sutra itself (Gómez et al. 1989, 16). Similarly, in spite of the huge number of theoretical and rhetorical considerations on the *samādhi* which gives its title, the *Śūraṁgamasamādhi-sūtra* contains only one brief passage on how the '*samādhi* of the heroic march' should be practised (T15.463b21–c5; P32.331b2–332a4): the *bodhisattva* should 'contemplate all phenomena as empty 空, with no resistance (無所障礙 *apratigha*)[50], perishing with each [moment of] thought 念念滅盡, without aversion or passion 離於憎愛'. We have here rather a general statement of a basic refrain of the Mahāyāna *Weltanschauung* supposedly realised in a state of deep concentration. Furthermore, the text adds that the way of practising this *samādhi* is not singular and its actual method of cultivation depends upon the functioning of the mind and mental concomitants (心心所行 **citta-caitta pravṛtti*) of each living being.[51]

The central and perhaps the oldest form of *samādhi* in the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature appears to be the set[52] known as 'the three concentrations' (*trayaḥ samādhyaḥ* 三三昧)[53], i.e. the emptiness concentration (*śūnyatā-samādhi*), the signless concentration (*ānimitta-samādhi*), and the directionless concentration (*apraṇihita-samādhi*). They correspond more or less to the traditional three gates of liberation (*trīṇi-vimokṣa-mukhāni* 三解脫門).[54] This triad might have played the role of a bridge between the two Vehicles by providing the proto-Mahāyāna ascetics with a preliminary epistemic model of emptiness (*śūnyatā*) and signlessness (*ānimitta*) which ultimately laid the foundations of the Great Vehicle paradigm shift.[55] The *Pañca* (p.208)[56] and the *Śata* (p.1440) use the same definition for the three concentrations as the *Ekottarāgama* (T2.630b) (Lamotte 1944–1976, 1213).[57]

There are, nevertheless, differences in the way Mahāyāna authors conceive the three *samādhis*. The most important is the practise of these concentrations without hypostasization[58]: 'The *bodhisattva*, the great being, practising the perfection of wisdom, does not connect [his actual practice of] emptiness with the emptiness [conceived of as an entity]; [therefore, for him] there is no binding to emptiness.' (*bodhisattvo mahāsattvaḥ prajñāpāramitāyāṁ caran na śūnyatāṁ*

*śūnyatayā yojayati na śūnyatāyogam. Pañca*, 48; cf. also p.52).[59] And the same goes true for signlessness and directionlessness. The three *samādhis* are considered virtually identical with the practice of the perfection of wisdom and are declared the most exalted form of cultivation[60] (*niruttaro hy eṣaḥ Śāriputra yogo yad uta prajñāpāramitāyogaḥ śūnyatāyogaḥ ānimittayogaḥ apraṇihitayogaḥ. Pañca*, 58–9; T8.224c23–4).[61] This spiritual omnipotence[62] makes them so effective that the *bodhisattva*'s career as a saviour for aeons is menaced. They can potentially trigger a speedy Awakening but if this is achieved before the completion of the bodhisattva's vows, then it amounts to the falling to the level of *śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas* (*Aṣta(M)*, 310). The *bodhisattva* must dwell in the concentrations of emptiness, signlessness, and directionlessness without actually realising them (*na sākṣātkaroti*). Their complete attainment would mean the realisation of the reality-limit (*bhūta-koṭi*) (*Aṣta(M)*, 373–9; *Aṣta(W)*, 749–61).[63] The *bodhisattva* should be like a bird in the air or like a skilful archer who shoots upwards one arrow and then keeps on shooting arrows in order to stop the fall of the first one (*Aṣta(M)*, 374; *Aṣta(W)*, 754–5).[64] To achieve this the *bodhisattva*, basing himself upon friendliness directed towards all living beings, ties himself to them, transcends whatever belongs to defilements and Māra[65] as well as the stages of *śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas*, and abides in the concentration of emptiness, etc.[66] (*yasmin samaye Subhūte bodhisattvo mahāsattvaḥ sarvasattvānām antike maitrīcittam ārambaṇī-kṛtya tān paramayā maitryā paribadhnāti atrāntare bodhisattvo mahāsattvaḥ kleṣapakṣaṁ mārapakṣañ ca atikramya śrāvakabhūmiṁ prayekabuddhabhūmiñ ca atikramya tatra samādhāv avatiṣṭhate. Aṣta(M)*, 373–4; *Aṣta(W)*, 754).[67]

The *Prajñāpāramitopadeśa*, which dedicates a long passage to the three *samādhis* 三三昧 (T25.206a–8a), considers these concentrations to be a very particular and extremely powerful type of wisdom (*prajñā*). When the interlocutor asks our author why these forms of *prajñā* are called *samādhi*, the latter answers: 'If these three types of wisdom are not established in concentration, they become mad wisdom (**unmattaprajñā*).[68] Many would [thus] fall into vicious doubts (**mithyāśaṅkā*), and they could not [practise] anymore. [But] if [these types of wisdom] are established in concentration, then they can destroy all defilements (*kleśa*) and obtain the true characteristic (*bhūtalakṣaṇa*) of phenomena. 是三種智慧若不住定中、則是狂慧。多墮邪疑、無所能作。若住定中、則能破諸煩惱、得諸法實相。. '(T25.20618–21). The treatise uses a simile to explain the mental functions involved in the three *samādhis*: 'When a king 王 arrives, he necessarily has with him his chief minister 大臣 and his attendants 營從[69]. The *samādhi* is like the king, the wisdom like the chief minister, and the other *dharmas* like the attendants' (T25.207a8–9). Although the three concentrations are declared to be a type of wisdom, their actual practice appears to be interwoven with the *dhyāna*. They are said to be found on nine or eleven *dhyāna* stages (地 *bhūmi*) according to whether we regard them as always pure (有漏 *anāsrava*) or as sometimes pure and sometimes impure (無漏 *sāsrava*) respectively (T25.207a23–b2).[70]

This is the basic picture offered by our texts. It seems that two major doctrinal concerns stand out as paramount for their authors. The first one, hugely sensitive for the Great Vehicle followers, is how a *bodhisattva* can engage in meditation, especially in the cultivation of enstatic states as well as emptiness, signlessness, and directionlessness, without losing his salvific involvement. The second one, which Mahāyāna inherited from earlier Buddhism, is how and to what degree non-discursive cognitive modes can be combined with rational observational thinking in order to attain the supreme Awakening. The Mahāyāna texts and followers usually assure us that they can successfully solve these problems. The *bodhisattva* can balance and even fuse his meditation practice with his immense compassion and messianic career. We are told that his spiritual techniques, especially *samādhi*, can subtly blend *dhyāna* with *prajñā*.

The task of a self-effacing, purely descriptive historian (if such a person can be said to exist) should perhaps come to an end here. I cannot, however, resist the temptation to ask two more philosophical questions. How can one engaged in the three *samādhis*, which by definition exclude all types of entities, characteristics, and mental orientation, **simultaneously** feel compassion and friendliness towards all living beings?[71] How is it possible to fuse *dhyāna* and *prajñā*? I am certainly aware of the immense difficulty of the question. Any attempt to answer such questions will transcend the realm of philologico-historical studies and land us in the field of the philosophy and psychology of religion. Even if an answer, let alone a certain one, may not be possible, the question will, nevertheless, satisfy a basic human need to discuss such propositions not only in terms of ascertaining their mere occurrence in historical sources but also in relation to truth-values. After all, these propositions admittedly try to say something about the essence of reality and human mind. Furthermore, the discussion of their truth-value will, in turn, help a more critically engaged (and by necessity no longer 'purely descriptive') historian to judge the role and development of these ideas.

Let me sketch out a brief answer to the first question. Do we have here a dogmatic patchwork meant to accommodate two basically incompatible practices, i.e. enstatic states and active social involvement? Or do we have to deal with spiritual modes and states which cannot be known and assessed by means of our normal epistemic categories? The traditional Buddhist answer would obviously favour the latter solution. After all, deluded *pṛthagjanas*, to which I undoubtedly belong, have no right to pass judgements on such lofty states which they cannot experience. The only alternative is, we would be told, to become *bodhisattvas* ourselves. With no foreseeable plans to embark upon this noble enterprise myself and, what is even worse, starting from different philosophical presuppositions, I am not willing to accept this position without strong reservations. This is not the place to develop a full-fledged epistemic dialogue with Buddhism, but as far as our normal understanding of psychological states (including and accepting the altered states of consciousness) as well as the basic requirements of logical consistency goes, it is very hard to believe that one can experience

**simultaneously** states of gradual decrease and eventual cessation of all discursive and emotional functions, on the one hand, and intense mental, verbal, and bodily activities for the salvation of the sentient beings, on the other. I rather tend to regard this as an instance of tension between what Schmithausen (1999)[72] aptly calls the two poles of Buddhist spirituality, i.e. detachment (*vimucacati, nibbindati, virajjati, upekkhā/upekṣā*) and caring for others (*karuṇā, kāruñña, dayā, anukampā*), in Śrāvakayāna, and emptiness (*śūnyatā*) and compassion (*karuṇā*), in Mahāyāna. In his excellent lecture, Schmithausen argues that while there is no doubt that these poles represent the two fundamental pillars of Buddhism, the actual relation, psychological and doctrinal, between them is not as simple as it may appear.[73] Though early Buddhism regards sympathy (*kāruñña*) as an important virtue, it does not consider it as 'an automatic effect of the awakening experience of the Buddha or even an inevitable outflow of *any* liberating experience' (p.6). We even see 'a certain tension between, on the one hand, the state of liberation characterized by *detachment* and, on the other, becoming *involved* in activity for the sake of others' (p.11). The Mahāyāna ideal of universal salvation brings new developments and nuances in the relation between the two poles, but the tension does not come to end. The *Prajñāpāramitā* literature in particular presents the *samādhis* of emptiness (*śūnyatā*) and 'transphenomenality' (*ānimitta*) as extremely potent and able to lead directly to the attainment of Buddhahood, which, when too premature, would compromise the salvific career of the *bodhisattva*. Schmithausen refers here to Chapter 20 of the *Aṣṭa*, which we have also discussed above. Here the *bodhisattva* 'should only become familiar with them [the *samādhis*], but he must not prematurely realize (*sākṣāt-kṛ*) them, he must not "fall" (*pat*) into them' (p. 17). Together with this careful practice, he must counterbalance these *samādhis* by cultivating benevolence or compassion with regard to all living beings (ibid.). The tension between the full awakening and salvific activity appears to be implicitly recognised by the texts themselves. The solution suggested here is basically one of balanced but separate practice of the two poles. The passages from the *Prajñāpāramitopadeśa* and the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa* discussed above seem to take a further step: meditative enstatic states, presumably quite potent and traditionally seen as part of the path towards liberation, are now said to include compassion, thoughts of the realm of desire, and normal behaviour. This *coincidentia oppositorum* represents a new step in the attempt to solve the underlying tension between the two poles. As an avowedly hopeless *pṛthagjana*, I find this development a doctrinally motivated move meant to portray the exalted ideal of the *bodhisattva*'s messianic mission rather than a psychological reality.

What about the *dhyāna* and *prajñā* fusion? This possibility is actually mentioned not only in relation with the three *samādhis* but also with the supremacy and comprehensive nature of the perfection of wisdom. The *Ratnaguṇa* declares that 'for those accomplished in the practice of the perfection of wisdom, all perfections are comprised in it (*prajñāva pāramita-śikṣita-saṁskṛtānāṁ*[74], *sarve ca*

*pāramita bhont' iha saṁgṛhītāḥ/* chapter XXV, verse 4, p.100). In a parallel passage, the *Aṣṭa* says: 'Subhūti, for the *bodhisattva*, the great being, thus practising the perfection of wisdom, all perfections are included in it' (*evam eva Subhūte prajñāpāramitāyāṁ śikṣamāṇasya bodhisattvasya mahāsattvasya tasyāṁ sarvāḥ pāramitā antargatā bhavanti. Aṣṭa(M)*, p. 431, *Aṣṭa(W)*, p. 825; Lokakṣema's translation: 須菩提、菩薩摩訶薩如是學深般若波羅蜜、總攝諸波羅蜜。. T8.357c19–21). Could we see it as a psychological reality, i.e. not only as a doctrinal ideal but also as an actual spiritual experience? To start with, there is no way we can ascertain this by means of philologico-historical methods. Furthermore, the answer to this question largely depends on how *prajñā* is understood. Even if we limit ourselves to one scripture or one class of texts, the exact definition of *prajñā* would require a study in itself. To make things more complicated, the texts themselves warn us that a purely theoretical understanding of the concept is impossible and its elusiveness is part of its nature. Despite all difficulties, I would risk a very general definition and say that *prajñā* is a subtle cognitive process which presupposes both an intuitive grasp of the reality and a high degree of awareness with no emotional support, i.e. attachment. Whatever the subtle relation between the non-discursive realisation and awareness may be, I do not think that *prajñā* is a cessation of all mental functions as the *nirodhasamāpatti*.[76] To the extant *prajñā* could be said to be an underlying attitude pervading the ascetic's life, I do not find it impossible to speak of its combination with *dhyāna* or any other practice. Problems of logical consistency (I only mean *pṛthagjana* logic) may, however, arise if we take *dhyāna* as a gradual decrease of emotional and cognitive activity culminating with *nirodhasamāpatti*. If this is the case, as in the passage from the *Prajñāpāramitopadeśa* which links the practice of the three concentrations to the nine or eleven *dhyāna* stages (地 *bhūmi*) (T25.207a23–b2), then the precise connection between *dhyāna* and *prajñā* becomes very difficult to explain. It may actually echo the relation between enstatic meditation (*śamatha*) and observational concentration (*vipaśyanā*) present since early Buddhism. Later scholastic tradition, Śrāvakayāna and Mahāyāna alike, have always portrayed *śamatha* and *vipaśyanā* as being in a state of balance and harmony. This view has been shared by many modern Buddhist and scholars. Studies like, to give only two examples, those of Cousins (1984) and Kōchi (1973) actually stress this aspect.[76] The relation between *śamatha* and *vipaśyanā* has, however, not always been that of a perfect marriage. The early canon records clashes between monks who practice the *jhāna*-meditation (*jhāyī bhikkhū*) and monks who are attached to the doctrine (*dhammāyogā bhikkhū*) (ANIII355–6). The relation between the 'rationalist' trend and the 'mystic' current, epitomised by Musīla and Nārada, was the subject of a classical study published by La Vallée Poussin in 1937. The attempt to harmonise the tension between the two paths has often been done by what Schmithausen, using Hacker's term, uptly calls ' "inclusivism", i.e. a method of intellectual debate in which the competing doctrine, or essential elements of it, are admitted but relegated to a subordinate position' (Schmithausen 1981, 223).

The process of relegating enstatic techniques to the role of ancillary or soteriologically irrelevant practices as found in the *Abhidharmakośa* and *Abhiḍharmasamuccaya* was brilliantly analysed by Griffiths (1983).[77] Though the relation between *dhyāna* and *prajñā* is much more complicated[78], we could, nevertheless, discover some reflections of the older *śamatha* and/vs. *vipaśyanā* pair.[79]

## 3. Meditation and the beginnings of Mahāyāna Buddhism

Whatever the *bodhisattva*'s spiritual cultivation may actually have been, it seems to me very unlikely that those men coming up with such complex and subtle innovations were simple lay people with a mere populist desire to make the new Vehicle open for a general 'easy ride'. The background seems to be that of an ascetic and philosophical milieu perfectly familiar with the doctrinal developments of the traditional Buddhism. Although the promise to become a Buddha was theoretically open to everybody, the way to do it was by no means simple to understand and practise. The people writing these texts were not anti-traditionalist, anti-elite laymen simply interested in proclaiming their rhetoric of the democratic superiority of the Great Vehicle over the Lesser Vehicle. It is true that their hermeneutic or innovative efforts sometimes had iconoclast fervour and smashing effects, but all these did not stem from ignorance or mere despise of the scholastic tradition. Basically, they were motivated, I believe, by a different philosophical outlook which must have grown gradually from within the Buddhist *saṅgha* itself.

Looking for the roots, or, at least, part of the roots of Mahāyāna into ascetic communities is basically a variety of the old hypothesis which regards the rise of the Great Vehicle as a gradual development from the traditional schools (*nikāyas*), usually from the more liberal and progressive Mahāsāṅghika group. Bareau's view on the origins of Mahāyāna (1955, 296–305) seems to me one of the most sensible formulations of the this theory.[80] The French scholar outlines quite a number of similarities existing between the Mahāsāṅghikas and the Great Vehicle (Bareau 301–304). He concludes, 'are there among the sects of the Lesser Vehicle ontological theses showing clearly Mahāyānist tendencies? To this question we can give an affirmative answer with all certitude.[. . .] The sects in question all belong to the Mahāsāṅghika group' (p.303). Backed up by a careful methodological treatment, the image of ascetic communities, doctrinally starting from a predominantly Mahāsāṅghika background, can better explain many, if not most, of the facts of the Mahāyāna rise.

At this point I must clarify a crucial methodological problem which underlies not only my presuppositions here but also many other studies dealing with Buddhist history. Although I surmise that some philosophical developments may have been the result of a doctrinal contrivance, as often pointed out above, there also instances in which I believe we could speak of a such a thing as real ascetic practice and that some passages in our texts seem to reflect it. I must confess that making the distinction between the two is an awfully complex problem but one

thing is sure: taking the scriptures at their face value without properly questioning their rhetoric is not going to take us too far in the field of the history of religion. In his recent study on 'Buddhist Modernism and the Rhetoric of Meditative Experience', Robert H. Sharf (1995) makes an excellent contribution to the questioning not only of the tradition itself but also of some of our current research clichés. Sharf's paper is very convincing in deconstructing the concept of 'pure experience' as well as in proving that the modern stress on *zazen* or *vipassanā* is largely an invented tradition (see pp.246–259), which is often subjected to the 'politics of experience' (see pp. 259–265). Sharf also contends that we have too frequently presupposed that meditation must have been the central preoccupation of the traditional monastic life. I quite agree with this position, and I hope that in what follows I shall adduce some extra evidence concerning this. I am also inclined to believe, partly in line with Sharf's argumentation, that Buddhist literature, even its specialised treatises on the spiritual cultivation, do not necessarily reflect the meditative experiences of their own authors.

My working hypothesis is that religious texts, including meditation manuals and treatises, represent an 'intertexuality' of sources and influences ranging from actual inner experiences to external factors. Excluding or favouring one type of sources, without sufficient evidence, can turn out to be methodologically biased. It is actually here that with due respect I would dare to disagree with Sharf and contend that the methodology employed by Schmithausen (1973;1976) may prove, when cautiously handled, a viable avenue for historical research. Sharf criticises the latter study for its methodological attempt to derive the formation of Yogācāra idealism 'from a *generalisation* of a fact observed in the case of meditation-objects, i.e. in the context of *spiritual practice*' (Schmithausen 1976, 241; also quoted by Sharf 1995, 237). Sharf's viewpoint is that 'His [i.e. Schmithausen's] argument does not demonstrate that Yogācāra idealism emerged from reflection on an actual experience, so much as it shows that such a position can be derived from reflection upon the prescriptive meditative and soteriological ideals enunciated in Mahāyāna textual sources' (p.238). He goes on to say that idealism could actually be derived from reflections upon epistemic errors or the ontology of dreams (ibid.). Now, I agree that it is indeed possible that the same generalisation could have been reached starting from different experiences and inferences. But on the other hand, I do not think that deriving a doctrine from inferences occasioned by actual meditative experiences is logically impossible (like, for instance, accepting that a 'married bachelor' is non-contradictory). A love novel may be the result of the author's desire to illustrate a theoretical philosophy as well as originate in a genuine emotional experience. I think that the passages analysed by Schmithausen point in the direction of inferences based on meditative experiences, but I confess that I cannot prove it in an absolutely conclusive way. The reason is that our verifiability principle here stands on a relatively fragile basis. We cannot possibly verify beyond doubt what the actual situation was centuries ago and, therefore, are left with the alternative of carefully reading and interpreting our passages.

Especially when it comes to interpretation, many texts are so open that a variety of readings become possible. Even when one interpretation is preferable to others, it rarely happens that the evidence will be absolutely conclusive.

In our case, the bottom line is whether reflection upon spiritual experiences is possible or not. Since Sharf does not deny the psychological possibility of meditative experiences as such (see pp. 259–260), it is hard to understand why he does not accept that one can draw conclusions from one's own experiences and reports of other people's experiences. It would actually be quite surprising that the human being would not be tempted to do it. If the experience is psychologically possible, and it is a very special one, as meditation achievements presumably are, then it is to be expected that the meditator would try to find out a place for this experience in his philosophical understanding of life. Pointing out that Buddhist doctrines are not necessarily the result of meditation, let alone 'pure experience', is logical and salutary. Sharf is here right that much too often historians have been tempted to explain things only by appealing to spiritual experiences. Denying the possibility altogether is, however, unnecessary. Strictly speaking, it would require that Sharf should prove beyond doubt that meditative experiences cannot logically serve as a basis for philosophical inferences or that in each and every concrete historical case so far meditation and reflection upon it have never been the source of a doctrinal development.

A final word about meditation: my assumption that meditative experiences may have been a basis of philosophical inferences is not motivated by the desire to defend the 'pure experience' or the supremacy of the contemplative way of knowledge. I actually speak of inferences based upon meditation and not of 'pure experience' as a direct source of doctrinal development, something which I find quite unlikely. Obviously, this is not the place to embark upon a full discussion but I should like to make a very brief comment. I do not think that the 'otherness' of an experience, i.e. its being of a different psychological quality, ensures its absolute truth-value. The only way we can decide our epistemic criteria is not by appeal to private experiences as the ultimate source of truth. The truth of a philosophically relevant proposition can only be proved by those common experiences which have, to use a Peircian term 'ultimate warranted assertibility'.

Let us now return to the beginnings of the Great Vehicle. As Harrison (1995, 66) points out, if we suppose that 'a substantial proportion of early Mahāyānists were forest-dwellers meditating monks', we could explain why early inscriptions contain almost no references to the Great Vehicle. It is significant that, as outlined above, the earliest epigraphical references to the Great Vehicle make their appearance from the 5th/6th centuries on and in the beginning they are mostly found on the 'cultural fringe' of the Indian civilisation (Schopen 1996, 13–14). The ascetic-centrality hypothesis can also explain why so many early Mahāyāna sutras, like the *Rāṣṭrapālaparipṛcchā*, the *Kāśyapaparivarta*, the *Akṣobhyavyūha*, the *Ugraparipṛcchā*, the *Ratnarāśi*, the *Samādhirāja*, etc., stress the need to live in the forest and practise the *dhūtaguṇas* (cf. Schopen

1996, 16–18). The *Rāṣṭrapālaparipṛcchā* and the *Samādhirāja* even use the old image of the solitary rhinoceros to recommend secluded spiritual cultivation. We can also understand why these early ascetic Mahāyānist communities, with little connection or, at least, with little control over the *stūpas*, were far less associated with their cult and exalted instead the worship, keeping, reading, copying, and spreading of their own scriptures. Many of the earliest Mahāyāna sutras, like, for instance, the *Pratyutpannasamādhi-sūtra* 般舟三昧經, the *Ajātaśatrukaukṛtyavinodanā-sūtra* 阿闍世王經, and the *Akṣobhyatathāgatasyavyūha-sūtra* 阿閦佛國經, are said to have talismanic powers which can protect from all types of disasters (Harrison 1993, 175–6).

The gradual rise of Mahāyāna from within the traditional *saṅgha* can explain the doctrinal continuities between the two movements. As we have seen in Section 2 of this paper, an impressive number of tenets and developments of the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature can only be understood if we refer to traditional Śrāvakayāna doctrines with which our authors seem to be perfectly familiar. The hypothesis of a gradual formation of the new movement can also better explain why in spite of its general tone of self-glorification the literature of the new movement contains many passages which strike a note of conciliation with the Śrāvakayāna ideals. The deep-rooted misconception concerning an unfailing, ubiquitous fierce criticism on the Lesser Vehicle by the new movement is not supported by our texts. It is true that such attacks do exit and that the *bodhisattva* ideal is universally presented as superior to all other religious aspirations, but the new agenda is not carried out at the expense of completely denying the old tradition. It has often been noted that the term *hīnayāna* does not occur so frequently in the earliest scriptures of the Great Vehicle (Harrison 1987, 80, speaking of the Chinese translations in the 2nd century CE; Shizutani 1974, 40–41, Saigusa 1981, 124–5, on the rarity of the term in the *Aṣṭa*[81]; cf. Conze 1978, 7, n. 1, which points out that *hīnayāna* is seldom used but terms like *hīnajātika, hīnaprajñā, hīnavīrya*, etc. are freely used). To be sure, the levels of the *arhats* and *pratyekabuddhas* are declared inferior compared to the attainments of a *bodhisattva*, but we find early Mahāyāna scriptures like the *Akṣobhyatathāgatasyavyūha-sūtra* 阿閦佛國經 which depict the *śrāvakas* as happily sharing Akṣobhya's Pure Land with the *bodhisattvas* (Harrison 1987, 83–4). Such examples of peaceful co-existence are not singular and can be equally found in the *Aṣṭa*, the *Ajātaśatrukaukṛtyavinodanā-sūtra* 阿闍世王經, and the *Cheng ju guang ming ding yi jing* 成具光明定意經 (ibid., p. 84). With the passage of time, the conciliatory tone of some of these early Mahāyāna texts gradually gives way to a more vehement, but not always complete, condemnation of the Lesser Vehicle.[82] According to Conze (1994, X VI), the increase of sectarianism is a main criterion for detecting the later accretions in the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature.

It is undoubtedly a conjectural scenario but I would imagine that a great part of the earliest Mahāyāna communities started as groups of ascetics motivated not only by a new understanding of the Path but also by a strong opposition to

the well-established monastic institutions which often tended to neglect the spiritual quest altogether. We would have here a particular case in the long history of the duality between forest-dwelling ascetics (*āraññavāsī/vanavāsī*) and monks living in villages (*gāmavāsī*) or towns (*nagaravāsī*). We actually know fairly well the evolution of this dichotomy in Southeast Asia and this has been brilliantly summarised by Tambiah (1984, 53–76). It seems that most of the ascetic movements which have repeatedly occurred throughout the history of the *saṅgha* in Sri Lanka, Burma, and Thailand paradigmatically started as a return to the pristine ideals of the early Buddhist Path: an intense practice of meditation accompanied by the strict observation of the Vinaya rules and, very often, of the *dhūtaṅgas*. Although the initial motivation of these groups did not presumably lie in gaining the patronage of the royal houses or masses, their rejection of the material wealth and their earnest spiritual quest, often associated, at least in popular imagination, with supernatural powers, have usually led to their immense popularity and frequent transformation into (paradoxically!) rich and well-established monastic communities. Another factor leading to their initially unhoped-for success was their neutral stance and distance from the political turmoil of their age, which made them suitable for the role of mediators and state-sponsored religious reformers. It is significant to note here the relations of these ascetic groups with their original communities as well as their gradual metamorphosis. Mendelson, also quoted by Tambiah (1984, 62), writes:

> The forest monks, much like the hermits, did not necessarily cease to belong to a mother community which might well be of the village kind. Later in time, forest monks began to appear in forest communities, devoting themselves no longer to meditation alone but indulging also in cultural and educational activities, as did town and village monks; in short, they seem to have been treated in some places as separate sects.

To return now to our early Mahāyāna Buddhists, we could surmise that a similar situation could have taken place. The initial motivation of breaking away from the mother community, most likely a Mahāsāṅghika milieu, must have been both doctrinal and spiritual. Not only that the dissident ascetics must have felt themselves growingly different from the rest of the community in their philosophical outlook but they also were perhaps disillusioned with the materialism as well as the passion for social respectability and fame of the monastic Establishment. There is a deep-seated tendency with a large number of modern students of Buddhism to associate monastic life, first and foremost, with the strict observance of disciplinary rules and intense meditation. Disappointing as it may be, the reality is often quite different from our ideals and hopes. Undoubtedly, there is a scarcity of materials concerning life in the Buddhist monasteries of ancient India. I do not mean here traditional ideals or modern projections filled with pro-Buddhist expectations. A patient and careful scholar can,

however, dig them out of the discouragingly intricate *Vinaya* and epigraphical sources. The scholar in question is no other than Gregory Schopen to whom we owe one of the very few studies on the monastic life and daily activities on the basis of the data contained in the Tibetan translation of the Mūlasarvāstivādin *Kṣudrakavastu* (Schopen 1997a).

Although the text makes it clear that the basic occupations (*bya ba*, **karaṇīyā*) of a monk are meditation (*bsam gtan*, **dhyāna*) and recitation (*gdon pa*, **paṭhanti*), these were far from being the only monastic duties, at least for large sections of the coenobites. For instance, sweeping the *vihāra*, both a cleaning activity and a ritual act, was as much part of the daily life as the more 'lofty' occupations, especially for the monks in charge of physical properties (*dge skos*, **upadhivārika*). Furthermore, many passages clearly show that the monks had to choose between specialising in meditation or recitation. In other words, 'a monk was expected to do one *or* the other but not both' (Schopen 1997a, 17). In the *Śayanāsanuvastu*, meditation in the forest is presented as potentially dangerous and in order to ensure a safe area for the tranquil practice of spiritual cultivation a place (*vastu*) in a public area (*prakāśe sthāne*) of the monastery had to be secured. This, in turn created the need for a series of new monastic occupations with coenobites specialised in and presumably dedicating all or almost all of their time to supporting this activity. The *Vinaya* texts actually authorise a series of many other menial jobs or qualified occupations necessary for the maintenance of the *vihāra* and ensuring smooth 'public relations' with the lay supporters.[83]

Certainly, these texts basically reflect the situation of the Mūlasarvāstivādin community, and a complete study must include all relevant data in the entire Buddhist literature. Passages hinting at the practical hardships a meditating monk may have actually faced are not, however, limited to Mūlasarvāstivādin sources. I should like to discuss here another example which comes from *the* meditation classic of the Theravādins, the *Visuddhimagga*. The monk whose morality (*sīla*) has already been purified should first approach a spiritual friend (*kalyāṇamitta*) in order to receive his meditation subject (*kammaṭṭana*). 'After that he should avoid a monastery unfavourable to the development of concentration and go to live in one that is favourable' (*Visuddhimagga*, p. 72; Ñāṇamoli tr. 1991, 90–91). A monastery unfavourable (*ananurūpa vihāra*) for the development of concentration (*samādhibhāvanāya*) is later on defined as a place which has any of 'the eighteen faults' (*aṭṭhārasa dosā*). 'These are: largeness, newness, dilapidatedness, a nearby road, a pond, [edible] leaves, flowers, fruits, famousness, a nearby city, nearby timber trees, nearby arable fields, presence of incompatible persons, a nearby port of entry, nearness to the border countries, nearness to the frontier of a kingdom, unsuitability, lack of good friends' (*Visuddhimagga*, p.96; Ñāṇamoli tr. 1991, 118). Each of these faults is then described in detail (*Visuddhimagga*, p.96–99; Ñāṇamoli tr. 1991, 118–121). Let us quote here only the fragment depicting the situation in the first faulty monastery:

> Firstly, people with varying aims collect in a *large monastery*. They conflict with each other and so neglect the duties. The Enlightenment-tree terrace, etc., remain unswept, the water for drinking and washing is not set out. [. . .] Drinking water must be maintained. By not doing it he [i.e. the monk who wants to practise meditation] would commit a wrongdoing in the breach of a duty. But if he does it, he loses time. He arrives too late at the village and gets nothing because the alms giving is finished. Also, when he goes into retreat, he is distracted by loud noises of novices and young bhikkhus, and by acts of the Community [being carried out].
>
> (*Vīsuddhimagga*, p.96–97; Ñāṇamoli tr. 1991, 118–119)

This and all the other faults clearly suggest that a decent, quite place to pursue one's spiritual cultivation, presumably *the* very raison d'être of the Buddhist Path, was not so easy to find within the Holy Community supposed to exist in order to facilitate and promote it. A large monastery (*mahāvihāra*) such as depicted by Buddhaghosa here was a far cry from the peaceful Shangri-La where the ascetic would find the quite and spiritually-friendly environment necessary for his practice. Not only that we see that many of the young brethren were noisy and the Community was busy with prosaic administrative businesses (how close indeed to our modern academic institutions!) but we are also told that the monks in the monastery gathered with ... varying aims or intentions (*nānāchandā*), and they, furthermore, quarrelled with each other (*aññamaññaṁ paṭiviruddhatāya*). Our ascetic does not seem to be expected to maintain the water, which, if my interpretation is correct, means that the monks actively engaged in meditation were served by other groups of coenobites doing the more menial jobs. They were perhaps an elite which the *vihāra* was supposed to treat with special care but ... reality must have often been disappointing. The monk in Buddhaghosa's scenario gets no special treatment and, moreover, being a conscientious brother does his duties and ... ends up with little time left for meditation and an empty stomach.

A restless soul tired of the existential *duḥkha* joining the Holy Order with a genuine aspiration for Awakening must have found many of these monastic establishments spiritually disappointing. Neither the Mūlasarvāstivādin texts discussed above nor the *Visuddhimagga* are contemporary with the proto-Mahāyāna age[84] but I assume that starting with the Aśokan period the growth of the institutional success of the Buddhist *saṅgha* may have paradoxically led to an increasing number of monastic establishments where meditation was hard to practise or confined to a minority. Actually, quite a few of the early Mahāyāna sutras direct their criticism not only against the inferior attainments and salvific abilities of the *śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas* but also against the decadence of the monastic institutions no longer fulfilling their spiritual goals. A full-fledged attack on the Śrāvakayāna appears to have been felt either doctrinally unnecessary or socially inadvisable. Some of the proto-Mahāyāna groups appear to have

genuinely considered that a large number of the traditional goals and practices could still be given a limited recognition in their new religious agendas. Other ascetic fraternities may have had to play down their critical tone. After all, in the incipient stage, they wanted to or had to keep minimum links with their mother communities and for a while were considered and probably considered themselves, at least in terms of Vinaya lineage, part of them. Some communities, few perhaps, had the zealot courage to break away in a more dramatic way but, by and large, the rise of the New Vehicle, as so many other historical events, must have been a gradual process.

While a vehement doctrinal criticism may have been considered unnecessary or inadvisable, a fierce attack on the monastic Establishment for neglect of the basic spiritual duties and aspirations must have been easier, even when it was directed at the mother community. This way we see so many early Mahāyāna scriptures lashing out at the excesses of the coenobites with no concern for spiritual values.[85] Suffice it here to quote three stanzas from the *Rāṣṭrapāla* which is one of the most representative sutras in this respect:

> Perpetually intent on gain they are, dishonestly feigning devotion to [religious] practice.
> 'No one in our world can ever vie with me in morality and virtues!', they will say.
> Indeed they do hate each other, always fond they are to mutually pick out their faults;
> With farming and with trade they occupy themselves. Far from them do the [true] ascetics stay![86]
> In future times these monks with no restraint, a far cry from morality and virtues,
> With their feud, dispute, and envy will bring the ruin to my Law!
> (*adhyavasānaparāḥ sada lābhe te kuhaśāṭhyaprayogaratāś ca*|
> *kaścid apīha samo mama nāsti vakṣyati śīlaguṅeṣu kathaṁ cit*||
> *te ca parasparam eva ca dviṣṭā chidragaveṣaṇanityaprayuktāḥ*|
> *kṛṣikarmavaṇijyaratāś ca śramaṇā*[87] *hi sudūrata teṣām*||
> *evam asaṁyata paścimakāle bhikṣava śīlaguṅeṣu sudūre*|
> *te'ntara hāpayiṣyanti madharmaṁ*[88] bhaṇḍanavigrahaīrṣyavaśena||)
> (*Rāṣṭrapāla*, p. 17)
> (常念利養不休息　諂曲詐現精進相　自謂持戒及苦行　一切無有如己者
> 惡口麁言喜鬬諍　常求人過不休息　彼恒遠離沙門行　營理田作及販賣
> 未來世中諸比丘　棄捨功徳及戒行　以懷嫉妬鬬諍故　覆滅損壞我正法)
> (Jñānagupta's 闍那崛多 translation, T11.460c12–17)

The bitter dissatisfaction of the author who speaks on behalf or in praise of the ascetics (*śramaṇā*), contrasted here with monks (*bhikṣava*), is very clear. The passage does not attack the coenobites because of their selfish preoccupation with their own liberation, the main Mahāyāna issue against the Lesser Vehicle,

but simply because of their complete abandonment of any religious ideals. It is true that this disillusionment could have been voiced by laymen who caught a glimpse of the presumable Nirvāṇa-seekers predominantly concerned with trade benefits and factional disputes (How contemporary it sounds!). I find it, nevertheless, more likely that this considerable degree of familiarity with the dealings and atmosphere of a monastic institution is a reflection of inside knowledge more likely to have been obtained by fellow- or former fellow-coenobites. These were rather scandalous disclosures of the '*saṅgha* behind closed doors' coming from insiders or, at least, laymen with a special status like Ugra in the *Ugraparipṛcchā*, which will be discussed below.[89]

The hard-liners who could not find a place where they could quietly meditate and whose calls of return to a pure life of spiritual dedication fell on deaf ears had the alternative of setting up a forest-dwelling community in which these ideals could be fulfilled. Add here a progressive doctrinal background and a taste for non-orthodox interpretation, occasioned by philosophical reflection on the true meanings of the Teaching and on meditative experiences, and you have the formula of the first Mahāyāna communities. Their followers could be oxymoronically portrayed as groups with fundamentalist ideals and innovative interpretations. Let us not forget here that both elements are necessary to make a proto-Mahāyāna follower. Stressing only the ascetic ideal does not take us too far. Despite the scarcity of meditation-friendly environments, the Śrāvakayāna Buddhists continued their tradition of spiritual cultivation. After all, not all groups of ascetics had to turn into Mahāyāna communities of forest-dwellers. The *Vinaya* materials and the *Visuddhimagga* passages discussed above point at the difficulty not at the impossibility of practising meditation. There are many clues which indicate to us that spiritual cultivation continued to be practised within the Śrāvakayāna doctrinal framework. The large number of meditation manuals and treatises, mostly preserved in Chinese translations, bear witness to the interest of the Śrāvakayāna authors in this area (Deleanu 1992; 1993).[90] There is nothing to prove beyond doubt that all these scriptures were written by the ascetics themselves but some passages seem to indicate first-hand knowledge of the actual practice. We also know that the *yogācāras* formed a respected group within the Sarvāstivādin community and their views are often recorded in the *Mahāvibhāṣā* (Nishi 1939). Finally, monks practising meditation (*prāhaṇīka*)[91] appear recorded as donors in inscriptions of the Kūṣāṇa age (Schopen 1997b, 31, 36; Damsteegt 1978, 247). Though their Nikāya affiliation is not known, they appear to be Śrāvakayāna monks.

Many of the earliest Mahāyāna communities started perhaps as 'fundamentalist' groups rather than revolutionary and populist fraternities. I use inverted commas here because fundamentalism is never a return to a perfectly reconstructable pristine Teaching of a founder. It is usually a blend of more or less dim knowledge of the early doctrines with a great deal of interpretation and agendas meant to serve contemporary needs. The earliest Mahāyāna Buddhists

had the fundamentalist goal of returning to the very roots. Instead of being content with the *arhat* ideal, of which they actually heard so seldom, if ever, in the monastic Establishment, they decided to recreate the Founder's own spiritual experience, or, in other words, to become Buddhas themselves. The movement was not necessarily started as a democratic avenue for all laymen to achieve the supreme Awakening. Yet its logic implied more openness: it is no longer the formal membership to the Order that matters but the desire to practise sincerely. While most of the ascetics of the new movement remained renunciant monks associated with a mother community, their 'formal' status, especially when considered from the latter's official viewpoint, must have been somehow in a grey zone. The stress of the importance of the formal membership to a monastic institution would have been as inadvisable as the emphasis of a complete break with the Order. This is not to say that the openness to laymen and their needs was a mere strategic move. Genuine feelings of sympathy and compassion towards these people and all living beings must have been at work here. After all, the 'Lesser Vehicle' is far from lacking a tradition in this respect. These genuine feelings were perhaps enhanced by the inside knowledge that the layman with his sincere belief in the merits of worshipping the *saṅgha* was actually cheated by corrupt *bhikṣus* who had betrayed the noble ideals. Last but not least, the sympathy and compassion must have been seen as an integral part of the ideal to become a Buddha. The picture of the founder himself, which many of the ascetics must have got through exalted biographies and *Jātakas*, was one of selfless dedication.

The universal salvation commitment is undeniably present in most of the earliest Mahāyāna scripture but I believe that it should not be unduly overemphasised. The earliest strata of the *Ratnaguṇa* and the *Aṣṭa* contain passages proclaiming the salvific mission of the *bodhisattva*[92] but this does not appear to be the most recurrent theme. What strikes one in these as well as other *Prajñāpāramitā* texts is the exalted exposition of the new cognitive mode which ensures the attainment of the supreme Awakening. It is called the perfection of wisdom (*prajñāpāramitā*), or the wisdom of the Sugatas (*sugatāna prajñā*)[93], or the omniscience (*sarvajñātā*, etc.)[94]. The first two chapters of the *Ratnaguṇa* often repeat, almost like a refrain, the following sentence: 'this is the practice of the wisdom, supreme amongst perfections' (*eṣā sa prajña-vara-pāramitāya caryā*) (Ch. 1, verses 12, 14, 23, 24, 26, 28; Ch. 2, verses 1, 12) (cf. Conze 1994, X). Even in the case of a sutra like the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, for which the One Vehicle salvation theme is central, the early history of the text appears to be characterised by a more marked emphasis on the wisdom aspect. As Karashima points out in his brilliant philologico-historical study (1993, especially 171–174), in contrast to the Nikāya tradition which makes a sharp distinction between the awakening of a *śrāvaka śrāvakabodhi*), a *pratyekabuddha* (*pratyekabodhi*), and the Buddha (*anuttarā samyaksaṁbodhi*), the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* strongly urges everybody to attain the wisdom of a Buddha. The importance of the wisdom in the sutra is also apparent from the fact that in its earliest version

the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* was an eulogy of the Great Wisdom (*mahājñāna*) rather than of the Great Vehicle (*mahāyāna*). The following fragment sums up one of Karashima's most important conclusions in this study:

> [. . .] in the idiom used by the old SP [=*Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*], both *jñāna* and *yāna* had the same form *jāṇa* (*jāna*). It was the parable of 'the house in flames and the three carts' 火宅三車 in the *Aupamya* Chapter which added to the sutra the amusing flavour of a narrative based upon a word play making use of this situation. But this word play resulted in confusion. In the idiom of the old SP, *jāṇa* (*jāna*) had both the meaning of 'vehicle' and 'wisdom' but it appears that only the *Aupamya* used the term with its meaning of 'vehicle', while the other chapters probably used it in the sense of 'wisdom'.
> [. . .] However, with the passage of time, the original idea was forgotten and under the influence of the *Aupamya* Chapter, even places in which the word should have been construed as 'wisdom', it started to be interpreted as 'vehicle'. [. . .] This led to the wrong Sanskritisation of *jāṇa* (*jāna*), originally meaning 'wisdom', as *yāna* ('vehicle').
> (Karashima 1993, 173)

This great emphasis on wisdom must have been in line with the fundamentalist agenda of the early Mahāyānists. Becoming a Buddha oneself means the transcendence of all attachments whatsoever, and the corollary of this new ideal is that the adept must forsake the attachment to this ideal itself.[95] The early *arhat* ideal is not so different from this but what gives Mahāyāna its distinctive flavour is pushing the non-attachment, emotional and cognitive, to its utmost logical consequences. Nirvāṇa must be sought without being sought, practice must be done without being practised. A discursive mode of thinking can no longer serve the basic purpose of attainment without attainment. It is here that meditative states, super-normal powers, and Buddha's inspiration come to play a crucial role. I am not the first one to point out that there is an unmistakable vein of mysticism running through the *Prajñāpāramitā* and Mādhyamika literature (cf. Vetter 1984; Conze 1978, 6; May 1959, 20; de Jong 1949, X II). The combination of discursive reflection and mystical realisation represents the very core of the Prajñāpāramitā philosophy, and much of its development can certainly be interpreted as a process of inner evolution. There is, nonetheless, another aspect, linked to the historical realities of the age, which must have proved enormously beneficial for the exponents of the early Great Vehicle movement. The stress on mystical and supernatural attainments, usually connected with meditation and ascetic practices, was also a guarantee of freedom, at least doctrinal freedom, from the monastic Establishment which may have had claim of control of the scholastic and ordination orthodoxy but had no strong means of suppressing declarations of direct inspirational creativity.[96] As Harrison (1995, 66) aptly remarks.

> The followers of the Mahāyāna had to lay claim to be in a sense the true inheritors of Gautama, the inheritors of his mantle, and they had to establish that claim both with other Buddhists and with the population at large. There were, as far as I can see, two possible ways of doing this: by the possession of relics, and by the (perceived) possession of ascetic techniques and magical powers.

Most of the *samādhi*s in Mahāyāna Buddhism are declared to be inaccessible to *śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas*.[97] The adept who mastered them could claim that he shared a spiritual experience similar to that of the Buddha and this entitled him to say that he was speaking by the Buddha's might.[98] This is clearly illustrated in a large number of Mahāyāna sutras and emphasising this aspect appears to have been a major concern for the earliest authors. The introductory part of Chapter 1 of the *Aṣṭa*, for instance, wants to make it clear from the very beginning that whatever Subhūti will say it will be said by Buddha's might or authority (*buddhānubhāvena, Aṣṭa(M)*, p.4, *Aṣṭa(W)*, pp.28–30; Lokakṣema's translation: 持佛威神, T8.425c).[99]

Like the in the case of the forest-dwelling monks of Southeast Asia, the pure way of life of the proto-Mahāyāna communities as well as the emerging ideal of the spiritually accomplished and compassionate *bodhisattva* must have led to a definite interest and respect amongst lay people. Nothing of this survives in inscriptions or documents but one thing is sure: these early Mahāyāna groups could not have survived without a certain degree of lay support. It is impossible to give even a very rough estimation of the scale of the new movement. Again, only a general statement can be made. The assumption of a high number of proto-Mahāyāna groups and followers would automatically imply a greater social presence, and this is not supported by archaeological and epigraphical evidence. If, on the other hand, we surmise that their number was very low, we could not explain the impressive textual output which undoubtedly continued throughout this period of inscriptional silence. Even if the scale of the new movement was small or relatively small, its existence could hardly have escaped totally unnoticed to the mainstream monastic community. Yet, the scarcity of direct references and attacks against Mahāyāna in Śrāvakayāna sources is surprising. I would conjecture here that the next step in the history of Mahāyāna was its tacit acceptance (not in a doctrinal sense but social) by large segments of the Śrāvakayāna Order and the beginning of a new phase of peaceful co-existence. The more tolerant monasteries accepted co-existence with such groups, which, as I have suggested above, must have often kept some relations with a mother community. This situation lasted for centuries and this explains why the Chinese travellers speak so often of mixed monastic communities. Even when 're-included' into the mainstream monasticism, the Mahāyānikas appear to have remained or kept geographically and institutionally peripheral for the next few centuries.

What were the merits of this symbiosis? Maybe some Śrāvakayānika

communities, despite the shortcomings of their institutions, were genuinely tolerant and found a place for these ascetics with which they often shared a common Vinaya lineage. Maybe the orthodox coenobites and scholastics wanted to keep the new potential trouble-makers under control, and it was better to have them under their eyes than far in the forest. For the Mahāyānikas, the benefits could have been multiple. Their economic survival was on a more certain basis. If cautious not to create a disruption of the monastic institution itself, they could recruit new converts from amongst their fellow-monks or laymen. They could also diversify their activities and form new specialised subgroups, as the keepers of the *Bodhisattva-piṭaka* or the followers of the Bodhisattva Way (preachers?) in the passage below.

A glimpse into this new phase of co-existence as well as into the role of the 'layman' in the Great Vehicle is offered by the *Gṛhapatyugraparipṛcchā-sūtra*, one of the earliest scriptures to be translated into Chinese.[100] The sutra revolves round the question of the householder Ugra 甚理家[101] concerning the way renunciant *bodhisattvas* 開士去家爲道者 and lay *bodhisattvas* 開士居家爲道者[102] should practise the Path (T12.15c; T.12.23b; P23.Shi297b–298b).[103] After preaching the importance of the three refuges, morality, and converting 教化 the sentient beings, Bhagavat's 衆祐[104] answer takes an unexpected turn for one accustomed to the Vimalakīrti-type of Mahāyāna sutras. The Lord exposes the evils of the householder's life, compared with the sea never satiated to swallow rivers, an excellent food mixed with poison, etc. (T12.17c; T12.25b; P23.Shi305a). He utters a long eulogy on the virtues of becoming a monk (T12.19a; T.27.a; P23.Shi313b–317a), the ten ascetic practices (*dhūtaguṇa*) (T12.20a; T12.28a; P23.Shi321b), and dwelling in the forest (T12.20a–21c; T12.28a–29c; P23.Shi323a–328a).[105] The sutra contains here interesting details about what I assume to be the symbiotic phase of a Śrāvakayāna-Mahāyāna community. Ugra is told that he must strive to learn and practise under the following categories of monks (T12.19a28–b3; T12.27a21–25; P23.Shi317b5–8): the erudite 多聞 (**bahuśruta*)[106], the one versed in the sutras 明經者[107], the one observing *vinaya* 奉律者[108], the one keeping the [*Vinaya*] matrices 奉使者 (?)[109], the one keeping the *Bodhisattva-piṭaka* 開士奉藏者[110], the one [dwelling in] mountains and marshes 山澤者 (**āraṇyaka*)[111], the one practising the acceptance of [any kind of?] offering 行受供者 (**paiṇḍa-pātika*)[112], the one practising meditation 思惟者[113], the one practising the Path (*yoga*?) 道行者[114], the one of the Bodhisattva Way 開士道者 (**bodhisattvayāna*)[115], the one helping [with the menial affairs of the monastery] 佐助者[116], and the supervisor [of the monastery][117] 主事者 (T12.19a–b; T12.27a–b; P23.Shi317a–318b).[118] These categories are not portrayed as antagonist groups of lay followers or ascetics, on the one hand, and traditional Mainstream, monastics, on the other, but rather a symbiotic gathering of monks with apparently different doctrinal convictions and religious preoccupations.

Although Ugra is instructed in the first part of the sutra on specifically lay practices, near the end of the text the Lord exhorts him to lead a life according to the

renunciant's precepts 受去家之戒[119] (T12.22.a; T12;30b; P23.Shi330b–331a).[120] It is true that Ānanda is told by the Buddha that Ugra's virtue[121] cannot be matched even by a thousand *pravrajita bodhisattvas* (T12.22b; T12.30c; P23.Shi322a), but our main character has already attained an extraordinarily high spiritual level. This is far from an assertion that lay people, as we commonly understand the term, can attain the supreme Awakening as such. In this case the lay status is purely formal and is maintained only for the sake of liberating sentient beings in more effective way. Lay *bodhisattvas* like Ugra must undergo a thorough training according a full-fledged ascetic cultivation programme wrapped in a skilful Mahāyāna package. In such contexts, the term 'lay bodhisattva' becomes volatile.[122] In terms of spiritual cultivation, we can hardly call Ugra a lay follower. He is an ascetic in disguise.[123] It would seem that even if we accept a full or limited role of the lay followers in the rise of Mahāyāna, the overwhelming importance of their ascetic training cannot be denied. This background should, in turn, be explained and investigated as the real key to the origins of the Great Vehicle movement. And this is what this modest contribution has tried to do in a preliminary way.

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## Notes

1 The word 'preliminary' qualifying anything which has to do with scientific research is more or less a pleonasm. Strictly speaking, any scientific study is by necessity preliminary as future discoveries and rethinking of the matter will potentially require its revision or discard. I use the word here in its weak sense to stress the very high degree of 'preliminariness' of my study. Not only that far more data are necessary to cover the complex problems concerning meditation and the beginnings of Mahāyāna but also a great deal of philological work is needed to solve many difficult issues which underlie all texts. I often had to sacrifice the latter in favour of a bird's eye view of the topic.

2 The phrase 'den dogmatischen Schlummer unterbrach' comes from the *Prologomena zu einer jeden künftigen Metaphysik, die als Wissenschaft wird auftreten können* (*Prologomena to any Future Metaphysics*) (Kant 1911, 260), originally published in 1783 as Kant's response to the criticism received by his first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. I must immediately add that in using Kant's famous words, which

acknowledge his indebtedness to David Hume, I have no pretension whatsoever that I deserve to be compared with the great German philosopher. Any expectation of a 'Copernican Revolution' is, therefore, inadvisable.

3 Needless to say that Hirakawa's theory is not singular. Suffice it to mention here Lamotte's classical article (1954), whose main thesis is repeated in Lamotte 1984.

4 Williams (1989, 22) also quotes this fragment. He then adds, 'It seems unlikely to me that the Mahāyāna was the result of organized and influential activity by lay people.'

5 Schopen is not mainly concerned here with the periodisation of the Great Vehicle as such. He refers to the period from the beginning of the Common Era to the 5th/6th centuries as the Middle Period of Indian Buddhism (Schopen 1996, 1), and this largely coincides with my dates for early Mahāyāna. I take this opportunity to thank very much Professor Schopen for allowing to quote from and refer to the handouts of his lectures (Schopen 1996; 1997a). His findings have not been published in English yet but I understand that, fortunately, a Japanese translation of these lectures will soon be released.

6 There are extremely rare cases of references to Mahāyāna before the 5th/6th centuries in documents other than Mahāyāna scriptures themselves. A 3rd century document from Niya, in the Serindian cultural zone, uses the phrase *mahāyāna-saṁprastita* (Schopen 1996, p.44, n. 39). Then we find it 'in a primitive form in an inscription recording the donation of a trader or merchant in the Northwest (Mathura-2nd/3rd Cent.)' (ibid., p. 45, n. 39).

7 In a personal communication Paul Harrison also suggested me the 6th century as the upper limit of the early Mahāyāna period.

8 A careful collation of all Sanskrit versions, Tibetan and, more important in this case, Chinese translations is a must. Unfortunately, lack of time has prevented me from doing it with all passages, and this, admittedly, is a serious drawback of the present study.

9 Very few modern scholars have doubted the attribution of the translation to Lokakṣema. One example is Hayashiya (1948, 519–569) who considers that the translator of the *Dao xing boruo jing* was Dharmarakṣa 竺法護..

10 For a critical survey of the main hypotheses concerning the textual history of the *Aṣṭa*, see Schmithausen (1977, especially 35–40). The intricate situation of the many Chinese translations and the light they shed on the development of the sutra is discussed in Lancaster (1975, 30–41). The classical survey in Japanese of the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature remains Kajiyoshis's detailed study (1980). The *Aṣṭa* lineage is discussed mainly between pages 40 and 98. Needless to say that the main historical and philological data concerning the *Aṣṭa* can also be found in Conze 1978.

11 For more details, see Yuyama 1976, X X XIX ff. The Tibetan translation, especially the Dunhuang recension, appears to be very important for the textual history of the text (ibid. XVI—XVII; X X X ff.).

12 Yuyama (1976, X IX) also cites Conze's hypothesis. He also notes that the language of the text is obviously old representing 'a fine example of Buddhist Sanskrit literature at its earliest stage' (Yuyama 1976, X X).

13 In Conze 1978, 9, the great scholar sounds much more cautions and states that 'it is very difficult to come to a decision on whether it is the *Ratnaguṇa* which is prior to the *Aṣṭa* or the other way round.

14 I am aware that the argument of simplicity alone does not necessarily yield the same conclusions in determining the earliest layers of a text. Speaking about the *Aṣṭa*, for instance, P.L. Vaidya conjectures in the Introduction to his edition of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* (*Buddhist Sanskrit Texts*. No. 4. Darbhanga: The Mithila Institute, 1960, p.X VI) that Dharmodgata's sermon in chapter 31 (especially paragraph

1 on page 259 of his edition) represents 'the oldest and simplest form' of the Prajñāpāramitā doctrine, Conze (1994, X VI), on the other hand, declares chapters 30 and 31 to be 'quite late' additions. Conze, and many other modern scholars who share a similar view, adduce, however, extra evidence from the history of the Chinese translations of the text to support the fact the above chapters represent a later accretion.

15 Kajiyoshi calls the *Aṣṭa* groups of versions and translations the '*Dao xing jing* 道行經 lineage' and the *Pañca* group the '*Fang guang jing* 放光經 lineage'. A detailed treatment of the latter is found in Kajiyoshi, 1980, 97–111. For a brief overview of Kajiyoshi's conclusions concerning the historical development of the whole *Prajñāpāramitā* corpus, see ibid., pp.723–727. For a discussion of the textual history of the *Pañca*, see Letheoe (1976). Though not mainly dedicated to an analysis of the *Pañca* recensions, Schopen (1977) contains not only pertinent remarks on Conze's translation of *The Large Sutra on Perfect Wisdom* but also a very useful survey of all relevant texts.

16 This is the most probable reconstruction of title which the treatise adopts when referring to itself. The original title may have also been **Mahā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra-upadeśa*. On the title and its probable Sanskrit reconstructions, see Lamotte 1944–1976, vol.3, pp.V–VIII. The Japanese scholar Unrai Wogihara reconstructed it as the **Mahāprajñāpāpāramitā-upadeśa-śāstra* (quoted after Nakamura 1987, p.239, n.25).

17 Though Lamotte uses the word in singular, I think it is equally possible that we may have to deal here, as in the case of other encyclopaedic works, with a number of authors and redactors.

18 Any discussion concerning the author(s) of the *Prajñāpāramitopadeśa* should also take into account Kumārajīva's role. This is acknowledged by contemporary Chinese sources which tell us that the original Sanskrit text was much longer and Kumārajīva actually condensed the treatise. For all relevant details, see Lamotte 1944–1976, vol.3, pp.X LIV–L. Not all modern scholars have, however, viewed Kumārajīva's role in the translation/editing process of the text as an attempt to abridge the supposedly huge original. Hikata (1958), for instance, thinks that the basic text of the *Prajñāpāramitopadeśa* was written by Nāgārjuna himself but Kumārajiva played an active part in editing and enlarging many passages. Such a view remains, nevertheless, highly conjectural. On the other hand, though not exactly an enlarging the text, Kumārajīva and his jumbo-sized 'editorial board' of 500 scholars did add explanations of Indian terms to make the reading more palatable for the Chinese reader. This is clearly proven by Lamotte (1944–1976, vol.3, pp.XL IX–L) who also agrees that in this sense Hikata's distinction between passages authored by Kumārajīva and those attributable to 'Nāgārjuna' is quite justifiable (Lamotte refers here to Hikata's Introduction to his edition of the *Suvikrāntavikrāmin*). The great Belgian scholar sums up this process as: 'L'*Upadeśa* est l'œvre d'un Indian, mais que ses traducteures mirent à la sauce chinoise; et ce fut là in raison de son succès' (Lamotte 1944–1976, vol.3, pp.XLIX).

19 I should like to express my whole gratitude to Dr Zacchetti who kindly sent me a copy of his paper and allowed me to quote from it.

20 It is very good news indeed that Dr Zacchetti intends to publish his excellent study soon. This will undoubtedly enable the readers to appreciate the soundness of his textual evidence and argumentation.

21 Zacchetti rightly sounds a cautious note, however, against any possible exaggeration of the importance of his findings: 'Besides these isolated instances of "anticipation pattern", no systematic influence of the DZDL on Sanskrit Larger *Prajñāpāramitās* can be found' (p.8).

22 In many instances, it is very hard, if not impossible, to decide what is directly related to spiritual cultivation. Technical passages on *dhyāna* or *samādhi* can certainly be identified but these are not the only methods of a *bodhisattva*'s training. Especially, the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature, with its relativist position, tends to argue that it is not so important what you practise but rather how you practise. Seen from this perspective, a text like the *Vajracchedikā*, which probably belongs to the early strata of the *Prajñāpāramitā* texts (Nakamura 1987, 160–1), contains virtually nothing on meditation. The way of looking into the (non-)reality of phenomena which it exposes is, however, the most important part of the *bodhisattava*'s spiritual cultivation.

23 The exact translation of *apraṇithita(-samādhi)* raises difficult problems. The most frequent renderings are 'wishlessness' and 'desirelessness', the latter being also adopted in the first version of this paper. I am most grateful to Dr Lance S. Cousins who kindly pointed out to me that this is not the most appropriate rendering and that the *Critical Pali Dictionary* equivalents of 'aimless, not bent on anything . . .' more aptly convey the original meaning of the term. I am also greatly indebted to Professor Schmithausen who kindly answered my question concerning the meaning of the term by referring me to his views expressed in the book review on the *Sanskrit-Wörterbuch der buddhistischen Texte aus den Turfan-Funden* (Schmithausen 1987). Coupled with a careful (I hope) reading of some relevant passages, my rethinking of the matter has led me to believe that 'directionless(ness)' would better convey the lack of mental orientation which seems to characterise the state. I must, nevertheless, add that though the two eminent scholars mentioned above have been instrumental in reshaping my understanding of the concept, I am alone responsible for devising this translation. I am aware that 'directionless(ness)', whether appropriate or not, has the disadvantage of contributing to the proliferation of the abstruse Buddhist Hybrid English vocabulary.

Now, although I think that this translation is philologically more appropriate, 'wishlessness' and 'desirelessness' are not completely incorrect provided that they are properly construed. Not directing one's mind towards objectives or objects of existence may be said to mean not to desire or wish for them. The Indian sources I have consulted actually seem to imply both nuances, i.e. not directing one's mind towards any *dharmas* is at the same time not desiring them. It must, nevertheless, be stressed that in those texts which have survived only in Chinese translation the way *apraṇihita-samādhi* is explained may be influenced by the rendering adopted by the translator(s). 'Wishlessness' and 'desirelessness' are, however, full of other connotations both in their everyday usage as well as in modern Buddhist studies. I have opted for 'directionless(ness)' which though less frequent and perhaps clumsy, better reflects the lack of mental orientation.

Let us first see what the sources have to tell us:

The *Kośa* (p.450, 1.1) uses in connection with *apraṇihita-samādhi* the phrase *tad atikramābhimukhatvāt* or 'due to being directed towards the transcendence of these [i.e, *anitya, duḥkha, samudaya*, and *mārga*]' (Xuanzang's translation: 能緣彼定得無願名。皆爲超過現所對故。T29.149c24–5). This refers to orienting one's mind towards the transcendence of the Noble Truths of suffering, origination, and path, which are only preliminary means preparing the adept for the actual attainment of Niryāṇa.

The *Mahāvibhāṣā* says, 'The reason for calling the mental direction *apraṇihita-samādhi* is that the practitioners set their mind [in such a way] that they do not desire the *dharmas* of the three realms of existence.' 期心故者、謂無願三摩地、諸修行者期心不願三有法故。(T27.538b17–8). (La Vallé Poussin 1980, vol. 5, p. 184, n. 1, reconstructs 期心 **āsaya* and translates it as 'intention'). The text continues: 'Although in regard to the Holy Path there is no complete desirelessness, the [practi-

tioner's] mental direction does not wish for the three realms of existence.' 雖於聖道非全不願、而彼期心不願三有。(T27.538b19).

The *Prajñāpāramitopadeśa* defines the term as '*apraṇihita* is knowing that there are no signs (*nimitta*) and thus there is nothing [towards] which an effort [should be made]. It is called the gate of effortlessness' 無作者、既知無相、都無所作。是名無作門。(T25.206c16–17) (Lamotte 1944–1976, vol.3, p.1219, translates 作 as 'réaction' or 'effort (*abhisaṁskāra*)')

The Tibetan translation is usually *smon pa med pa* which literally means 'absence of desires or wishes'. Chinese renderings basically vary between 無願 or 'desirelessness' (adopted, amongst others, by Xunazang) and 無作 or 'effortlessness' (used by Lokakṣema, Kumārajīva, etc.) (For a detailed list of Chinese translations of the three concentrations in *Prajñāpāramitā* texts, see Yumada 1959, 221).

Schmithausen (1987, 153–4) points out that the translation 'unbegehrt, Unbegehrtsein' or 'not desired for, lack of desire' adopted by the editors of the *Sanskrit-Wörterbuch der buddhistischen Texte aus den Turfan-Funden* (see Bechert 1976, p.105, s.v. *apraṇihita* 2) is not the most appropriate. Instead, Schmithausen shows that *apraṇihita* must be understood as '[seine Aufmerksamkeit bzw. Begierde] nicht auf ... gerichtet habend oder richtend' (p. 154) or 'not having directed or directing [one's attention or desire] towards'. Amongst many other sources, Schmithausen quotes from the *Vibhāṣāprabhāvṛtti* ad *Abhidharmadīpa* 583: *na praṇidhatte bhavam ity apraṇihitaḥ*, which he translates as 'nicht [auf das Dasein etc.] gerichtet' (p.514) or 'not directed towards [the existence, etc.].

Apart from the wide-spread use of 'desirelessness' or 'wishlessness', let us note here that Lamotte (1944–1976) translates 無作三昧 (Kumārajīva's equivalent of *apraṇihita-samādhi*) as 'concentration de lu non-prise en consideration', and Vetter (1984) renders the term *apraṇihita* as 'free of goals'. In his *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit* (s.v. *apraṇihita*). Edgerton gives the translation of '(state that is) free from desire, longing, or purpose'. Rather uncommon and not exactly appropriate, Horner (1938, vol.1, p.161) translates *appaṇihito samādhi* as 'concentration where there is no hankering'.

24 In a study on the spiritual practices of the *Prajñāpāramitā* ascetic, Mano (1977) concludes that the content of the practices as such did not differ from the Lesser Vehicle. The difference lies in the *bodhisattva's* altruistic commitment and active role in society. I can agree with this view only partially. It is true that the two Vehicles shared a common heritage of many practices but we should not forget the innovations, technical and theoretical, brought about by the Mahāyāna ascetics.

25 See, for instance, *evaṁ carantu vidu-paṇḍitu bodhisattvo nārhatva śikṣati na pratyaya-buddha-bhūman/ sarva-jñatāṁ anuśikṣati buddha-dharme śikṣā-a-śikṣanaya śikṣati eṣa śikṣā* (*Ratnaguṇa*, p.19, verse 7).

26 For an excellent discussion of the visualisation techniques, see Yamabe's recent contribution (1999). Sueki (1986, 208–211) also discusses the historical significance of the visualisation sutras but I am afraid that I cannot agree with many of his conclusions.

27 The Chinese translations contain a section which has no direct parallel in the Tibetan version and has a more categorical wording of the basic stance of the sutra: 'Thought creates the Buddha, thought itself sees him. Thought is the Buddha ... Since thinking is empty, then whatever is thought is ultimately non-existent' (Harrison 1990, 43). 心作佛。心自見。心是佛。....設使念為空耳。設有念者了無所有。(T13.906a 1–2 and 6–7 respectively).

28 The Taishō edition has: 一切字法不受字. I have emended it by deleting the last character 字. Not only that this 字 would make the meaning of the phrase difficult to understand but we also find a parallel sentence in the same chapter: 一切字法不受 (T8.426b1).

What the first 字 exactly stands for is not clear to me. Does it have its usual meaning of *kāra* or *akṣara*? Could it refer to *nimitta*? As explained above, Lokakṣema's translation is not a word for word equivalent of the extant Sanskrit text. The phrase here appears, however, to represent the rough equivalent of the *samādhi* name which we find in the Sanskrit edition: *sarvadharmānupādāno nāma samādhiḥ* (*Aṣta(W)*, p.60). The Chinese text does not indicate that this is a *samādhi* name but in the next sentence it says that the *samādhi* (apparently referring to this *samādhi*) is infinite, etc. Maybe Lokakṣema translated faithfully his own Sanskrit version which is different from the one we have today. Or maybe it is just a rather awkward rendering into Chinese which omitted *nāma samādhiḥ*.

29 Haribhadra comments: '*sarva-dharmā nopādīyante yena samādhinā sa* sarvadharmānupādāno nāmo samādhiḥ' (Wogihara, p. 60).

30 The Chinese has: 無有邊無有正. The Sanskrit has *sarvadharmānupādāno nāma samādhir bodhisattvasya mahāsattvasya vipulaḥ puraskṛtaḥ apramāṇa-nitayaḥ* . . . (*Aṣta(W)*, p.60). I take 無有正 to stand for *apramāṇa*, though this is far from being the standard Chinese translation of the term. The same phrase is also found at T8.426b1–2.

31 The Sanskrit text, which is the continuation of the above sentence, has: [*samādhir* . . .] *asādhāraṇaḥ sarva-śrāvaka-pratyekabuddhaiḥ* (*Aṣta(W)*, p.60).

32 The Sanskrit text has: *kṣipram anuttarāṁ samyaksaṁbodhiṁ abhisaṁbudhyate* (*Aṣta(W)*, p.60).

33 The extant Sanskrit text contains no reference to the state of non-regression (see next note).

34 The Sanskrit version for this second paragraph goes like this: *Buddhānubhāven' āyuṣmān Subhūtiḥ sthavira evam āha| vyākṛto 'yam Bhagavan bodhisattvo mahāsattvaḥ pūrvakais tathāgatair arhadbhiḥ samyaksaṁbuddhaiḥ anuttarāyāṁ samyaksaṁbodhau| yo' nena samādhinā viharati| sa tam api samādhiṁ na samanupaśyati| na ca tena samādhinā manyate| ahaṁ samāhitaḥ| ahaṁ samādhiṁ samāpatsye| ahaṁ samādhiṁ samāpadaye| ahaṁ samādhi-samāpannaḥ ity evaṁ tasya sarveṇa sarvaṁ sarvathā sarvaṁ na saṁvidyate||* (*Aṣta(W)*, pp. 60–1). Roughly speaking the philosophical message of both the Chinese and Sanskrit texts is the same. Differences of detail are, however, present, and this shows again that we have to deal here with two distinct redactions.

35 For a detailed discussion of this *pāramitā* based on many Mahāyāna sources, most of which are not dealt with here, cf. Dayal 1970, 221–36.

36 Hirakawa (1974, vol.1, p.354) makes this conjecture in connection with one of the earliest Mahāyāna scriptures, the **Ṣaṭ-pāramitā-sūtra* 六波羅蜜經 which is no longer extant.

37 The equivalents *vitarka* and *vicāra* for 覺 and 觀 respectively are assured by the fact that the *Prajñāpāramitopedeśa* uses the same characters for these terms in the standard definition of the first *dhyāna* (cf. T25.186a5).

38 The Chinese 滅定 undoubtedly refers to the attainment of cessation. Lamotte's translation (1994, 44), based on the Tibetan version and Xuanzang's 玄奘 Chinese translation, understands the term as referring to *nirodhasamāpatti*. The Tibetan '*gog pa* is not unproblematic. It usually stands for the Sanskrit *nirodha* but this does not necessarily mean that it refers to *nirodhasamāpatti*, whose full Tibetan translation is '*gog pa'i snyams par 'jug pa*. Thurman (1991, 24) translates here 'without forsaking cessation' and explains 'cessation' as 'Skt. *nirodha*. The third Holy Truth, equivalent to nirvāṇa' (p.115, n. 4). Bhikṣu Prāsādika reconstructs '*gog pa las kyang mi ldang* (*Vimalakīrtinirdeśa*, 404; see note 41 below) into Sanskrit as *nirodhān nottiṣṭhati* (*Vimalakīrtinirdeśa*, p.86). Lal Mani Josh translates *nirodha* into Hindi as *nirodh kī avasthā* or 'state of cessation' (ibid., p. 216).

All the three Chinese translations make it clear, however, that we have to deal here with a meditative state. Kumārajīva and Xuanzang use 滅定 which is the standard translation of *nirodhasamāpatti*. Zhiqian 支謙 is not so clear but his wording also implies a trance state without mental activities, which most probably is the attainment of cessation (see note 39 below). Furthermore, the whole fragment deals with the correct way of practising meditation which makes *nirodhasamāpatti* sound very appropriate. The overall sense of the paragraph also appears to support reading *nirodhasamāpatti* here. All Buddhist laymen, after all, are supposed to perform ordinary deeds and not forsake Nirvāṇa, even though they are not usually able to attain it in this lifetime. So it would come as no surprise that Vimalakīrti is able of such a thing. On the other hand, being immersed in *nirodhasamāpatti* and yet displaying normal behaviour is indeed a great feat becoming the famous *bodhisattva* and fully agreeing with the other great deeds listed in this passage.

39 Cf. Lamotte's rendering (1994, 44): 'Not withdrawing (*vyutthātum*) from the recollection of extinction (*nirodhasamāpatti*), but displaying ordinary attitudes (*īryāpathasamdarśana*), this is how to meditate'. Lamotte basically follows the Tibetan version and supplies in small format (like 'recollection' above) the variations and additions found in Xuanzang's Chinese translation. The Chinese 威儀 as well as the Tibetan *spyod lam* very likely render here the Sanskrit *īryāpatha*.

40 Kumārajīva's (T14.539c21–22) and Xuangzang's (T14.561b14–15) translations here are identical. The wording of Zhiqian's 支謙 version, which is our earliest textual witness translated sometime between 223–253, is somehow different: 立於禪以滅意現諸身。是為宴坐。(T14.521c6–7) 'Being in trance (**dhyāna*) and ceasing all thoughts [, and yet] displaying bodily [behaviour], this is the [correct] practice of meditation (**pratisaṁlīna*)'. The basic meaning is, however, the same.

41 Bhikṣu Prāsādika's edition of the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa* has *'jog pa*. I believe it is simply a typographical error for *'gog pa*, i.e. the usual Tibetan translation of *nirodha*.

42 Cf. Gunaratana 1985, 8–11.

43 The *Aṣṭadaśasāhasrikā* uses the compound *samādhipāramitā* at least two times (vol.1, pp.94–5; vol.2, 19–21) in places where one would expect to see *dhyānapāramitā*. This may be another proof of the importance given to the word *samādhi* in the *Prajñāpāramitā* texts. Without other contexts, however, it is dangerous to draw conclusions as to whether we have to deal here with a mere synonym of the *dhyānapāramitā* or a deliberate lexical choice implying the superiority of *samādhi* over *dhyāna*.

44 Haribhadra says nothing about their number and actual practice (cf. Wogihara 1933, p.97, 11.26–7).

45 The Tibetan translation of the *Śata* apparently gives the number of 162 (Conze 1975, p.20, n.109). I have not been able to check the reference myself. The Sanskrit version edited by Ghoṣa gives first 115 *samādhis* (pp. 825–835, which list all *samādhis* with a short description) and then 121 *samādhis* (pp.1412–1414, which enumerate the *samādhis*, and pp. 1415–1426, which explain briefly each of them). We may have here a process of accretion within the same sutra. Anyway, a comparison with the 58 *samādhis* of the *Aṣṭa* suggests that the authors and redactors of the *Prajñāpāramitā* texts kept on increasing the number of *samādhis*.

46 The sutra first lists 17 *samādhis* and then adds *peyālaṁ yāvad Gaṅgānadīvālikopema-samādhikoṭīnayutaśatahasrapratilabdho*.

47 A final conclusion is further precluded by the difficulty of accurately dating the *Mahāvibhāṣā*.

48 Conze (1975, 21) aptly remarks, 'In the beginnings of the Mahayana it became usual to give names to a manifold variety of concentrated attentions on insights into aspects of truth, and even to the concomitants of being in a state of concentration.'

49 I have adopted the translation given by Gómez et al. (Gómez and Silk 1989, 15–16). For a discussion on the philological problems raised by this term, see Gómez and Silk 1989, pp.79–80, n.7.

50 McRne (1998, 77) translates the term as 'unobstructed'. I consider Lamotte's (1965, 257) rendering of the phrase as 'suns résistance' more appropriate. The term *apratigha* appears frequently in *Prajñāpāramitā* texts with the meaning of 'non-resisting' (for references, see Conze 1967, 54).

51 The text also makes an interesting remark that this *samādhi* contains all *dhyānas, samāpattis, vimokṣas, samādhis, abhijñās*, and *ṛddhis* (T15. 631c27–632al; P32.289a3–a5). But this is again a generality which says nothing about this *samādhi* as a particular meditative technique. A similar remark is found in the *Pañca* (p.144, 11.8–9): *tatra katamaḥ śūraṅgamo nāma samādhiḥ. yena samādhinena sarva-samādhīnāṁ gocaram anubhavaty ayam ucyate śūraṅgamo nāma samādhiḥ*. 'What is the *samādhi* called 'the heroic march'? That *samādhi* by which the domain of all *samādhis* is encompassed is said to be the *samādhi* called "the heroic march" '.

52 *Prajñāpāramitopadeśa* (T25.207c–208a) declares the three concentrations to be actually identical and to have a unique object. This *samādhi* can assume different varieties according to the aspect examined and the type of person practising it.

53 A brief but, as usual, extremely well documented note on the three *samādhis* is found in Lamotte (1944–1976, vol.3, pp.1213–5). In an excellent paper on mysticism in the early *Prajñāpāramitā* literature and Nāgārjuna, Vetter (1984, esp. 497–508) also discusses the three concentrations. For a study on the three *samādhis* in the Sarvāstivāda tradition, see Kawamura 1966. In his study mainly dedicated to *animitta*, Harvey (1986) also frequently refers to the *suññatā* and *appaṇihita* in Pali Buddhism.

54 For canonical sources, cf. Vin III92–3, DNIII219, SNIV360, AN 1 299, Mil 337. Vin III 92–3 uses three terms apparently referring to the same set of practices: *vimokkho'ti suññato vimokkho animitto vimokkho appaṇihito vimmokho, samādhīti suññato samādhi animitto samādhi appaṇihito samādhi, samāpattīti suññatā samāpatti animittā samāpatti appaṇihitā samāpatti*. The three gates to liberation in these canonical sources and its later Abhidharmic developments are construed according to the basic doctrinal framework of the Śrāvakayāna. Suffice it here to give only one example. The commentary to the *Vinaya* text cited above says that empty means empty of passion, hatred, and confusion (cf. Horner 1938, vol.1, p.161, n.3). Cf. also Vetter 1984, 500–1. The *Prajñāpāramitopadeśa* (T25.207b–c) contains a fairly detailed discussion on the particularities of the three concentrations in the Mahāyāna contrasted to the Śrāvakayāna understanding. The main characteristic is discussed in relation to the emptiness concentration and represents the well-known difference between the Śrāvakayānika *sattvaśūnyatā* and the Mahāyānika *dharmaśūnyatā*.

55 Lamotte (1965, 22) also notes the close relation between the two Vehicles in respect with the three concentrations: 'trois Samādhi appelés Portes de la déliverance (*vimokṣmukha*) où le Petit Véhicule confine au Grand'.

56 For other definitions, cf. *Pañca* p.222; *Aṣṭadośa*, p.47; *Prajñāpāramitopadeśa* (T25.206a–c).

57 Akanuma (1929, 133) gives the *Sutta* no. 163 in the *Tikanipāta* (AN 1 299) as the Pali equivalent of this Chinese translation. It is true that the Pali text also deals with the three concentrations, but unlike the Chinese text, and the corresponding Sanskrit *Prajñāpāramitā* fragments, which define the three *samādhis*, *Sutta* no.163 speaks about the three concentrations as the three methods (*tayo dhammā*) which can eradicate *rāga, dosa, moha*, etc. Unless we take similarity of topic as a very general criterion of correspondence, this Pali *Sutta* cannot be considered an equivalent of the Chinese and Sanskrit passage in question.

58 Abhidharma Buddhism seems to have been aware of this danger. The *Kośa* (pp.449–51) speaks of three other *samādhis*, i.e. *śūnyatāśūnyatā-samādhi, apraṇihitāpraṇihitā-samādhi*, and *ānimittānimitta-samādhi* whose objects (*ālambana*) are *śūnyatā-samādhi, apraṇihitā-samādhi*, and *ānimitta-samādhi* respectively (ibid., 450). Cf. also La Vallé Poussin 1980, vol.5, pp.184–192.

59 Conze (1975, 62) translates slightly different: 'a Bodhisattva, a great being who courses in perfect wisdom, does not join emptiness with emptiness, nor is emptiness a matter for joining'.

The Chinese version reads: 'The *bodhisattva mahāsattva*, practising the perfection of wisdom (*prajñāpāramitā*), does not connect emptiness with emptiness. [...] Why? Emptiness, signlessness, and directionlessness are not something which can be connected or not connected.' 菩薩摩訶薩行般若波羅蜜 時、空不與空合。[...] 何以故？空、無相、無作、無有合與不合。(T8.223b6–9).

The additions in the square brackets in the main text belong to me. My understanding largely coincides with the *Prajñāpāramitopadeśa* (T25.328c16–24) which comments upon the passage as follows: 'There are two types of emptiness. One is the emptiness concentration, and the other is the emptiness of phenomena (**dharmaśūnyatā*). The emptiness concentration is not something that can be connected with the emptiness of phenomena. Why? If one made efforts to become united with the emptiness of phenomena by means of the emptiness concentration [alternative rendering: 'if one forcefully attempted to connect the emptiness concentration with the emptiness of phenomena'], then the own-nature (**svabhāva*) of phenomena would no longer be empty. Furthermore, what is empty has a nature which is empty by itself. It is not produced by causal conditions (**hetu-pratyaya*). If it were produced by causal conditions, it would not be called "empty of nature".' 空有二種。 者空三昧、 二者法空。 空三昧不與法空合。 何以故？若以空三昧力合法空者、是法非自性空。又空者性自空。不從因緣生。若從因緣生、則不名性空。(T25.32817–21). I am indebted to Dr Stefano Zacchetti who kindly drew my attention to this commentary in the *Prajñāpāramitopadeśa*.

On the meanings of *yajayati* and *yajayati*, see Conze (1967). On the phrase *na yujyate* in the later Madhyamika philosophy, see May (1959, p.56, n.19c).

60 Lamotte (1944–1976, vol.3, p.1214) considers that unlike the Theravāda Abhidhamma, the Sarvāstivāda scholastic tradition grants these three concentrations a significant place in the framework of the spiritual path. Dr Cousins personally informed me that the three concentrations have a very significant role in the Theravādin *Abhidharma*. I am not prepared to discuss the matter in detail here but I agree that we need to rethink this view expressed by Lamotte.

61 I understand *yoga* here as 'practice'. The Chinese translates here as 相應 or 'correspondence', 'relation', etc. Conze (1975, 65) renders it as 'endeavour' which is rather vague in this context. My understanding is that *yoga* replaces here the usual terms of *samādhi* or *vimokṣa*. The compound *prajñāpāramitā-yoga* occurs in the *Aṣṭa* (*Aṣṭa(M)*, p.344; *Aṣṭa(W)*, p.701).

62 The three concentrations are also called gates to liberation because their practice leads to *vimokṣa* and *nirupadhiśeṣanirvāṇa* (*Prajñāpāramitopadeśa*, T25.207a).

63 On the same theme of practising the concentrations, without abandoning the living beings and without actually attaining the Buddhahood, cf. *Aṣṭa*, p.310; 356–7; 371;375–79;

64 The simile of the archer is also found in the *Ratnaguṇa* (Ch.20, stanzas 9–10, Yuyama ed. 1976, pp. 77–8). Cf. Vetter 1984, p.506, n.21.

65 Conze (1994, 224) translates 'factiousness of the defilements and of Mara'. I think that Kajiyama's and Tanji's (1975, vol.2, 173) rendering of *kleṣapakṣaṁ mārapakṣañ* as 煩悩に属するもの、魔に属するもの is more appropriate, Haribhadra does not

explain the term as such but says: *Māra-pakṣaṁ cātikramyeti anen' āntarāyika-dharma-samatikramaṇopāyaḥ sūcitḥ syāt* (Wogihara ed., p.754).

66 Both Conze (1994, 224) and Kajiyama and Tanji (1975, vol.2, p.173) understand *samādhāv avatiṣṭhate* as referring to dwelling in the friendliness concentration. This is a distinct possibility but I think it makes more sense to understand the phrase as denoting the emptiness concentration (as well as the signlessness and directionlessness concentrations) which should be practised upon a friendliness basis. Haribhadra does not make any comments concerning this point.

67 For a discussion of this passage, cf. also Vetter 1984, 506 and Schmithausen 1999, 16–18.

68 I use for this passage Lamotte's reconstruction (1994–76, 1220). Lamotte translates 狂慧 as 'sagesses frénétiques'.

69 Lamotte (1944–76, vol.3, p.1222) translates 營從 as 'soldats (*sainika*)'. In note 1 on the same page he remarks that a similar comparison appears on page 135 (vol.1). The Chinese text in question (T25.72c2) has instead of 營從 the compound 侍從, translated by Lamotte as 'suite (*parivāra*)'. I could not find the lexeme 營從 in any dictionary of Classical Chinese but both characters suggest the meaning of 'attendants' or 'servants', which is actually supported by the apparently equivalent usage of 侍從 in the above simile.

70 This distribution is essentially the same with the *Mahāvibhāṣa* (T29.539b1–2) and the *Kośa* (Pradhan ed., 451) (cf. Lamotte 1944–1976, p.1224, n.3). This suggests again the familiarity of the author with the Sarvāstivāda tradition.

71 Cf. verse 24, Chapter 1 of the *Ratnaguṇa* (p.14–15) which gives us the classical definition of compassion in the Great Vehicle: the *bodhisattva* 'produces [his] great compassion [but] has no notion of living beings' (*mahatiṁ janeti karuṇāṁ na ca sattva-saṁjñā*; Chinese translation: 發大慈悲為衆生、為已不起衆生相。T8.677b14–15).

72 I am grateful to Professor Schmithausen who kindly allowed me to quote from and refer to the handout of his excellent lecture.

73 The problem is obviously related to the four *apramāṇa*s and this has recently been the subject of an excellent contribution by Maithrimurthi (1999). Maithrimurthi's detailed study follows their doctrinal history from the beginnings of Buddhism to the early Yogācāra.

74 Faxian 法賢 appears to have read: *śikṣita-asaṁskṛtānāṁ*. He translates: 若學般若住無爲、能攝一切波羅蜜。(T8.682c7).

75 The *prajñā* mode appears, however, to be a cessation of verbal activities. The culmination of the *bodhisattva*'s career is described as *sarva-vāda-caryoccheda* or 'the stopping of all speech and practice' (Lamotte 1984, 93). This is, I believe, an intuitive state rather than a complete coming to a halt of all mental functions.

76 Cousins (1984) deals with *samatha* and *vipassanā* in the Pali Canon. Kōchi (1973) uses a variety of sources from Chinese translations of Abhidharma texts and the *Yogācārabhūmi* to Zhihui 智顗 and the Chan tradition.

77 I am much indebted to Schmithausen and Griffiths (1983) for the methodology of dealing with spiritual cultivation from a philologico-historical perspective. To the latter I also owe the terminological dichotomy of enstatic (a word actually coined by Mircea Eliade) and observational techniques.

78 An aspect which could not be treated here is the triad *śīla, samādhi*, and *prajñā* which is a pan-Buddhist doctrine. A complete discussion of the relation between meditation and wisdom should, therefore, take into consideration this relationship, too.

79 Though not referring to the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature in particular, La Vallée Poussin (1937, 190–191) seems to contrast *prajñā* with *śamatha, samādhi, dhyāna*, and *samāpatti*. We have seen, however, that the relation between all these practices is not so simple.

80 Bareau believes that the original home of Mahāyāna should be sought in a region between Godaverī and the Ganges, i.e. Konakan, Mahākośalla, and Orissa (p. 300). This represents Bareau's version of the hypothesis which places the beginnings of the Great Vehicle in Southern India, a theory with a long history both in traditional and modern accounts. Related to this geographical placement, Bareau also gives some clarifications concerning his view on the main sectarian influences upon the early Mahāyāna communities. 'The Buddhist communities of this region must have received two currents of influences, one coming form the North, from Magadha, the sacred land of Buddhism, where all sects mixed together in their pilgrimages, and the other from the South, from the land of Andhra, where a group of sects lately issued from the Mahāsāṅghikas had settled and developed since before the Common Era' (p.301). I am not in a position to give any conclusive pros or cons against Bareau's geographical placement, but it is commonsensical to say that this should be carefully checked against archaeological and epigraphical discoveries which have continued to pile up since 1955. It is worth mentioning that the earliest occurrences of the term 'Mahāyāna' in inscriptions mostly include peripheral places of the Indian civilisation: the mixed Serindian site at Niya, Mathura, Salt Range, Bengal, and Orissa (Schopen 1996, note 39, p. 45). Though not directly connected with the proto-Mahāyāna stage, these findings should, nevertheless, make us rethink (not necessarily reject) the theory of the Central Southern origin of the Great Vehicle. Bareau is actually aware of the fact that the earliest Chinese translations made by Parthian, Khotanese, and Sogdian monks in the 2nd century CE could represent a major shortcoming of a hypothesis which places the original homeland of Mahāyāna in Dekkhan. His conjecture is far from being unrealistic. Maybe, he says, the number of the missionaries of the new movement was too small, and their passage through the predominantly Sarvāstivādin Northwest was too fast to be remembered and recorded. Or maybe they still called themselves monks of the Sarvāstivāda, or Mahāsāṅghika, or Vibhajyavāda schools, and the Mahāyāna sutras which they were carrying were still considered to form a part of the *Saṁyuktapiṭaka* or *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* of these schools (Bareau 1955, 300). Again, I can only say at this stage that the whole matter needs to be reconsidered in light of the newest discoveries in all fields related to Buddhist studies.

81 Shizutani actually says, 'The Chinese translations of the *Aṣṭa* (*Shōbon hannya* 小品般若) despise the two Vehicles but do not call them *hīnayāna* yet. The term *hīnayāna* is later and seems to appear first in the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*' (1974, 40–41). Saigusa (1981, 124–125), referring to Vaidya's and Kajiyama's studies, points out that one occurrence of *hīnayāna* is, nevertheless, found in the Sanskrit Ms of the *Aṣṭa*, though he adds that he will not discuss the textual history of this passage. (Incidentally, it appears in Chapter 11 (*Aṣṭa(M)*, p. 238, *Aṣṭa(W)*, p. 50) which, as we remember, is not amongst the earliest.) He further gives data concerning the number of occurrences in the Kumārajīva's Chinese translation of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka: mahāyāna* 60 times, *hīnayāna* 8 times, etc.

82 Generally speaking, the Muhāyāna attitude towards the Hinayāna seems to have evolved into two main directions: (1) The *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, and later on the Tathāgatagarbha current, declare the Lesser Vehicle to be ineffective and proclaim the absolute supremacy of the One Vehicle (*ekayāna*), i.e. Mahāyāna. (2) Other trends, especially the Yogācāra, do not deny altogether the possibility of attaining Awakening by Śrāvakayāna spiritual cultivation but consider it an inferior form which the *bodhisattva* should not choose (Schmithausen 1999, 14).

83 In the answers following his lecture at Otani University in 1997, Gregory Schopen referred to passages in the Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya* which go as far as to portray the meditation practice in a negative way. It seems that meditation in this text usually

refers to the contemplation of the impure (*aśubhabhavanā*), which potentially could raise problems of respectability in a Brahmanic society so intensely preoccupied with polluting factors. Meditating monks are advised by the Buddha to build a meditation hall in order to avoid being accused of handling cadavers. Practising alone in the wilderness is presented as dangerous, and the monks are warned by the Lord that the forest is often haunted by *yakṣas* and *yakṣiṇīs*.

84 Buddhaghosa is actually concluding the passage discussed above with a quotation from the commentaries (*vuttaṁ pi c'etaṁ Aṭṭhakathāsu*) (*Visuddhimagga*, p. 99) which warn about these eighteen faults in verse form. Clearly, we have to deal here with a tradition which predates Buddhaghosa himself.

85 Schopen (1997a, p. 16, n. 52) gives a long list of such critical passages in the *Rāṣṭrapāla*, the *Kāśyapaparivarta*, und the *Ratnarāśi*.

86 Jñānagupta's 闍那崛多 translation suggests another understanding of this sentence: 'Far is he from the ascetic's practice!'.

87 Finot has *śravaṇā* in the text but notes that the two Chinese versions give the equivalent of *śramaṇā* (p.17, n. 2). I have emended and translated it accordingly.

88 Finot remarks that on the basis of the Chinese version this must be read *maddharmaṁ*. I have adopted this reading here but I want to point out that we also have another possibility. T11.460c17 has 我正法 or 'my true Law' which could be a translation of *saddharmaṁ*. In many varieties of the Northern India scripts *ma* and *sa* are very similar *akṣaras* which could be and actually were easily mistaken by the scribes. The Chinese 我 ('my') could be construed as an explanatory addition of the translator and/or *causa metri*, i.e. to keep the uniformity of the seven-character verse. T12.4b12 has 如來法 which does not appear to be a literal translation of a Sanskrit term here but a rough equivalent.

89 Ugra is told that he should not talk to the people of the village about what happens in the *vihāra*, and vice versa (T12.19b5–8; T12.27a26–28; P23.Shi318a). The purport of this interdiction is not an attempt to conceal monastic corruption. This is actually the fragment which exhorts Ugra to study under various categories of monks depicted as exemplary models of behaviour (see below). The interdiction concerning the disclosure of the monastic life to village people was probably motivated by the desire to keep secret those spiritual activities which were considered beyond lay understanding. The urge to refrain form talking about the village in the monastery must have originated from the need to keep the life of the monks 'far from the madding crowd' with its worldly concerns. For Ugra's special status as a layman, see below.

90 The group of texts known in Chinese sources as 'meditation scriptures' 禪經 include a number of texts of various affiliations ranging from purely Śrāvakayāna positions to hybrid creations and clear Mahāyāna doctrines and practices. The ascetics associated with these 'meditation scriptures' and their relationship to the rise of the Great Vehicle has been discussed by Odani (1996).

91 Edgerton translates *prāhāṇika* as 'engaging in (ascetic) exertion' and *prahāṇa* as 'exertion, strenuosity', the latter being discussed in a detailed entry. Lüders rendered the term as 'practiser of meditation' (see Schopen 1997b, 31, 36). Cf. also Damsteegt 1978, 247.

92 For the *bodhisattva*'s salvific dedication in the earliest layers of these works, see, for insatnce, the *Ratnaguṇa*, Ch. 1, verses 24, 25, pp. 14–15 and the *Aṣṭa(M)*, pp.20–21, 23–25.

93 Cf. *Ratnaguṇa*, Ch. 1, verse 12, p. 11.

94 Conze (1994, p. XX, n. 9) says that *sarva-ākāra-jñātā-caryā* or ' "knowledge of all modes" is a late scholastic term for the omniscience of the Buddha as distinct from that of other saints. The *Ashta* always uses the simpler term "all-knowledge", except

at XXX 507.' Lokakṣema's translation of the *Aṣṭa* use a phonetic transcription: 薩芸若 For a discussion of the development of the concept of omniscience in the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature, see also Kajiyoshi 1980, 635–351.

95 Cf. Conze (1975, 5): 'All the main thousand lines of this Sutra [i.e. The Large Sutra on perfect Wisdom] can be summed up in two sentences: 1. One should become a Bodhisattva (a Buddha-to-be), i.e. someone content with nothing less than all-knowledge attained through the perfection of wisdom for the sake of all living beings. 2. There is no such a thing as a Bodhisattva, or all-knowledge, or a "being", or the perfection of wisdom, or an attainment.'

96 We should not forget, however, the fourth offence involving defeat (*pārajika*) of the groundless claim of having attained the state of a the spiritually accomplished man (*uttarimanussadhammapalāpa*, *uttaramanuṣyadharmapralāpa*, 妄說得上人法). For the Pali *Vinaya*, see Vin III 87–109. For a detailed discussion of this defeat in the *Vinaya* literature, see Hirakawa 1993, 298–334. The case with our early Mahāyāna authors must have been delicate. These people were not considering themselves authors in the modern sense of the word but only transmitters of the authentic Teaching. It is hard to say whether this could be regarded as a *pārajika* case.

97 The appeal to abstruse *samādhis* as a way of proving the superiority of a teaching or Buddhist saint is not restricted to Mahāyāna texts alone. Migot (1956, 508–9) quotes a passage from the Chinese translation of the *Ekottarāgama* in order to show how appeal is made to such a *samādhi* in order to prove Śāriputra's superiority over Maudgalyāyana. I shall quote here only the most relevant part of the paragraph: 'But as to the *samādhi* entered upon by Śāriputra, Bhikṣu Maudgalyāyana does not know its name' 然舍利弗所入三昧，目連比丘不知名字。(T2.709b27–28). In another part of his classical study on Śāriputra, Migot (1956, 477) refers to a similar idea found in the *Aśokāvadāna*. The fragment in question presents a hierarchy of levels of understanding: a *pratyekabuddha* has not even heard of the name of the *samādhi* comprehended by the Buddha's wisdom; similarly, the name of a *pratyekabuddha*'s *samādhi* is unheard of to Śāriputra, and so on, gradually decreasing, to Maudgalyāyana, Mahākāśyapa, Upagupta's *upādhyāya*, and Upagupta himself (T50.162b).

98 Cf. Harrison 1993, 170–171.

99 Such a view must have been greatly facilitated by the Buddhology shared by the Mahāyāna exponents as well as most of the Mahāsāṅghikas.

100 The sutra was first translated into Chinese under the title of 'The Scripture on the Dharma-Mirror' 法鏡經 in 181 CE by the Parthian An Xuan 安玄 and the Chinese Yan Fotiao 嚴佛調. It was later translated by Dharmarakṣa 竺法護 as the *Yuqieluoyue wen pusa xing jing* 郁伽羅越問菩薩行經 at the end of the 3rd century or beginning of the 4th. It also forms Chapter 19 of the *Mahāratnakūṭa-sūtra* 大寶積經 (T11.472b–480b) translated by Saṁghavarman 康僧鎧 (3rd century?). The Tibetan translation '*Phags pa khyim bdag drug shul can gyis zhus pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo* also represents Chapter 19 of the *Mahāratnakūṭa-sūtra* (P23.Shi296b–333b). The text has been translated into Japanese by Sakurabe (1974). For modern studies, cf. Sakurabe (1974, 346–350) and Hirakawa (1990, vol.2, 108–187). My references to the various passages first give the pages of An Xuan's and Yan Fotiao's translation, then Dharmarakṣa's translation, and finally the Peking edition of the Tibetan version. Lack of time has unfortunately prevented me from collating all these passages with Saṁghavarman's translation.

101 I give only An Xuan's and Yan Fotiao's Chinese equivalents in the main text and write the variants in my notes. Dharmarakṣa has a phonetic transcription for Ugra: 郁伽長者. The Tibetan rendering of Ugra's name is *Khyim bdag drag shul can*.

102 爲道者, literally 'a person practising the Way', can be traced back to the *Lao zi* 老子

and the *Zhong yong* or *The Doctrine of the Mean* 中庸. In Chapter 48 of the *Lao zi* (Zhu ed., p. 192) we find the following passage: 爲學日益、爲道日損。'In the pursuit of Learning (*xue*) one grows day by day. In the pursuit of the Way (*dao*) one decreases day by day.' The modern editions usually have the above wording but a number of old editions and commentators insert 者 after 爲學 and 爲道, which would mean that we would have to read as 'the person who pursues . . .' (cf. *Lao zi*, Zhu ed., p. 192, notes). The Ma Wang Dui Ms, the earliest version of the text, has: 爲學者日益、聞道者日云(損)。'He who pursues Learning grows day by day. He who hears the Way decreases day by day.' (Lau ed., p. 204).

In Chapter 13 of *The Doctrine of the Mean* we read: 子曰、道不遠人。人之爲道而遠人、不可以爲道。'Confucius said, "The Way is not something remote from man. If a man pursues the Way and yet departs from man [i.e. humanity], then this cannot be regarded as the [true] Way." ') (*Zhong yong*, p. 226).

Yan Fotiao, who is also known to have studied and co-operated with An Shigao, probably had his basic training in Chinese classics and must have been familiar with such texts. As many of his fellow Chinese literati interested in Buddhism, he probably also felt attracted to Taoist works.

103 Dharmarakṣa's translates 出家菩薩 and 居家菩薩 respectively.

104 Dharmarakṣa uses the same 衆祐 for *bhagavat* which was widely used throughout the so-called archaic translation 古譯 period covering all Buddhist texts rendered into Chinese before Kumārajiva.

105 The praise of forest-dwelling is by no means restricted to our sutra. We find it in quite a few early Mahāyāna texts. The *Śikṣā samuccaya* dedicated a whole chapter to it (Bendall 1897, 193–201), which incidentally begins with a reference to the *Ugraparipṛcchā*. Dayal (1970, 222–3), quoting a large number of Sanskrit sources, refutes Anesaki's view that the Mahāyāna writers 'find the life of nobles or householders in no way incompatible with the practice of the *pāramitās* and the attainment of *bodhi*.'

106 Tibetan translation: *dge slong mang du thos pa*.

107 Tibetan translation: *dge slong chos rjod pa* or 'Dharma-reciting monk'.

108 Tibetan translation: *dge slong 'dul ba 'dzin pa* or 'the discipline-keeping monk (**vinaya-dharabhikṣu*)'. The division between monks specialised in sutras (*sutaṁtika*) and those experts in *vinaya* (*vinayadhara*) is very old being already found at the sites of Bhārhut and Sāñcī (cf. Schopen 1997, 26).

109 The exact category meant here is not very clear. What the exact sense of the Chinese 奉使者 is remains a mystery for me. I have translated it following the Tibetan version *dge slong ma mo 'dzin pa*, which unfortunately is not very clear either. I take *ma mo* to stand here for *mātṛkā* but it is again difficult to decide precisely what this means. It could refer to Abhidharma or proto-Abhidharma texts but it is more likely that it refers to Vinaya commentaries (cf., for instance, **Vinayamātṛkā* 毘尼母經 T24.801ff.). Sakurabe (1974, p. 278) translates it as 'the *bhikṣu* who keeps the Vinaya summaries' 戒律の綱要を保持する比丘. Actually in the following passage explaining what Ugra has to learn from each of these categories of monks, this *bhikṣu* is presented as a model from which the householder must study 'how to restrain his mental, verbal, and bodily acts' (P23.318a). Dharmarakṣa translates it as 住法者 or 'the one dwelling in Dharma', which again is not clear and does not seem to be the equivalent of the Tibetan term Neither his text nor An Xuan's and Yan Fotino's version includes 住法者 or 奉使者 in the passa explaining what Ugra has to learn from these categories of monks (T12.27b; T12.19b). If 奉使者 was really the original term used by An Xuan and Yan Fotiao in there translation, it is hard to decide what it actually meant. I think it is more likely that the text is corrupt and 使 should be emended to 律, but then we must either surmise an

instance of dittography or venture to operate a more daring addition to the text, e.g. 奉律母者 (?).

110 Tibetan translation: *dge slong byang chub sems dpa'i sde snod 'dzin pa*.

111 Tibetan translation: *dge slong dgon pa pa*.

112 Tibetan translation: *bsod snyoms pa*. The Tibetan version lists here four other categories not present in An Xuan's and Yan Fotiao's translation: *phyag dar khrod pa* or 'the one wearing only rags', *'dod pa chung pa* or 'the one with few desires', *chog shes pa* or 'the one easily content', and *rab tu dben pa* or 'the one living in complete solitude'.

113 Tibetan translation: *dge slong rnal 'byor spyod pa* (**yogācāra*; **yogin*).

114 Tibetan translation: *dge slong bsam gtan pa* (**dhyāyin-bhikṣu* or **dhyātṛ*). The Chinese terms used here lend themselves to several reconstructions and it is hard to decide precisely what Indian words they translate. The Chinese text, however, appears to list first **dhyātṛ* and then **yogin*. Dharmarakṣa has only 坐禪者 which could stand for both **dhyātṛ* and **yogin*.

115 Tibetan translation: *dge slong byang chub sems dpa'i theg pa*. Interesting to note that the lay follower is expected to learn under the monk of the Bodhisattvayāna the four means of conversion (*catvāri saṅgraha-vastūni*) (P23.Shi318b). This appears to be a *bodhisattva*'s minimum requirement of altruistic involvement, and it was inherited from the Śrāvakayāna tradition. The *cattāri saṁgha-vatthūni* are well known in the Pali Canon (D III 152; AN II 32; etc.). Together with the first two of the *brahmavihāras*, they could be the ethical 'missing link' between the two Vehicles. It takes only few steps to amplify them into full-fledged altruism and universal salvation.

116 Tibetan translation: *dge slong lag gi bla*, which is translated by Das as 'one who does the menial service to the congregation of lamas in a monastery' (s.v. *lag gi bla*).

117 Tibetan translation: *zhal ta byed pa*. Das translates this word as 'to serve, to inspect, review, superintend', etc. (s.v. *zhal ta byed pa*).

118 Dharmarakṣa lists more categories than An Xuan's and Yan Fotiao's version: 多智者、解法者、持律者、住法者、持菩薩品者、閑居行者、分衛者、服五衲衣者、獨行者、坐禪者、大乘者、精進者、典寺者、觀一切比丘僧行.

119 T12.22a27 has 誠. I follow here the Ming edition which gives 戒.

120 Dharmarakṣa's translation shows clearly that, at least in his version, we have here the equivalent of the full-ordination disciplinary rules (學具足出家戒法, T12.30b6). All translations actually list five principles supposed to be the equivalent of a monk's disciplinary rules. These principles are all very strict. For instance, they are very emphatic about celibacy, which should be prefectly observed even on the mental level (心不念習婬欲, T12.30b9–10).

121 Dharmarakṣa translates 'the wisdom of their virtue' 其德之智 (T12.30c6).

122 The term 'lay' in the Buddhist context has different co-notations from the Christian institutions. As Harrison has pointed out, 'the terms *upāsaka* and *upāsikā* do not mean "layman" and "laywoman" in the usual English sense, but refer rather to persons hovering just below ordained status, those who are, as it were, semi-ordained.' (1995, 59). For the misconceptions governing the way the terms clergy and laity are usually construed, see also Durt 1991.

The social status of lay characters like Ugra, Vimalakīrti, etc. is not without relevance. They are very wealthy and well-educated. To speak in Western terms, they are members of the gentry. The term has often been used to speak of the Chinese literati class but I think we can also use it, *mutatis mutandis*, for most of the wealthy Indian householders. The *New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* defines 'gentry' as 'people of gentle birth or good breeding; *the* class composed of such people, *spec.* that below nobility'. It would be interesting to collect all available data and come up

with an accurate statistical picture of the social groups to which the householders in Buddhist texts belong, but even when they are *vaiśyas*, therefore below the *brāhmaṇa* and *kṣatriya* castes, they still form part of the 'twice born' (*dvi-ja*) community. Their wealth must have further contributed to their 'good breeding'. Most of the characters in our texts appears to enjoy the privilege of enough time and leisure to devote themselves to spiritual quest. So even if we a were to speak of a 'lay Buddhist movement', we should adopt the more appropriate term of 'gentry Buddhist current'.

123 Such ascetics in lay disguise appear in the Pali Canon as well. We find, for instance, the householder (*gahapatti*) Citta giving doctrinal clarifications and speaking of meditative practices and theories to monks (SNIV281–304). I owe this reference to Dr Cousins's kind suggestion.

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With very few exceptions listed below, Tibetan sources are quoted from the Peking edition which is abbreviated as P. This is followed by volume number of the Otani University reprint, the folio number (which in this edition is written at the top of each page), and, occasionally, the line number.

Quotations from the Chinese *Tripiṭaka* are made from the Taishō edition (T) and they follow the usual conventions.

Dates in brackets indicate the edition used in this paper. For reprints, I have written the reprint dates in brackets and the edition dates on which the reprint is made in square brackets.

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# 35

# HOW THE MAHĀYĀNA BEGAN*

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I would like to put forward for discussion what I believe to be a new hypothesis. This hypothesis can be simply stated. It is that the rise of the Mahāyāna is due to the use of writing. To put it more accurately: the early Mahāyāna texts owe their survival to the fact that they were written down; any earlier texts which deviated from or criticized the canonical norms (by which I mean approximately the contents of the *Vinaya Khandhaka* and *Suttavibhaṅga* and the Four *Nikāyas*) could not survive because they were not included among the texts which the Saṅgha preserved orally.

Few Indologists have publicly reflected on how unusual a feat was performed by the early Buddhists in preserving a large corpus of texts for a long period – probably three to four centuries – purely by word of mouth. An admirable exception is the article by Lance Cousins, "Pali Oral Literature,"[1] which so far as I know has not yet had the recognition it deserves. Cousins in fact devotes less than six pages to the oral character of the earliest Pāli texts, and as my approach is somewhat different from his I shall have to cover some of the same ground again. But I hope to prove the truth of his claim that "consideration of the oral nature of the *Nikāyas* offers several profitable lines of historical investigation."[2]

Oral literature has been preserved all over the world, but modern research has shown that for the most part this literature is re-created at every re-telling. Verse epic and folk tale alike may have contents preserved over centuries, but they tend to be composed anew, often by professionals or semi-professionals, from a vast repertoire of clichés, stock phrases. That the preservation of oral literature may appear fairly informal must not make us forget that it depends nevertheless on institutions, on recognized and regular arrangements for training, rehearsal and performance.

The early Buddhists wished to preserve the words of their great teacher, texts very different in character from the general run of oral literature, for they presented logical and sometimes complex arguments. The precise wording mat-

tered. Cousins has rightly drawn attention to the typical oral features of the *suttantas*; great use of mnemonic lists, stock passages (clichés) and redundancy. He further points out that the differences between the versions of the texts preserved by various sects and in various languages are much what we would expect of oral texts.

> "These divergences are typically greatest in matters of little importance – such items as the locations of *suttas*, the names of individual speakers or the precise order of events. Only very rarely are they founded on doctrinal or sectarian differences."[3]

In corroboration I might add that the Buddhist tradition itself was well aware of this distinction. In its account of how the Canon came to be compiled, at the First Council, the introduction to the *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī* frankly says[4] that words of the narrative portions were inserted on that occasion, and thus clearly distinguishes between the words attributed to the Buddha and their settings. From the religious point of view this is perfectly understandable: the narrative framework of the sayings is not relevant to salvation.

Where I slightly differ from Cousins, as will appear, is in his stress on the probable improvisatory element in early recitations of the Buddha's preachings. The whole purpose of the enterprise (as certainly Cousins would agree) was to preserve the Buddha's words. I think the earliest Pāli texts may well be rather like the Rajasthani folk epic studied and described by John Smith, in which the essential kernel is in fact preserved verbatim, but variously wrapped up in a package of conventional verbiage which can change with each performance.[5] It is significant that this is done by a class of professional performers who are mostly illiterate.

Be that as it may, I suggest that it would never have occurred to the Buddhists that such a feat of preservation was even possible had they not had before them the example of the brahmins. Already for centuries the brahmins had been orally preserving their sacred texts, Vedic literature, by making that preservation virtually coterminous with their education. That education, which was the right and the duty of every brahmin male, might last up to 36 years;[6] it consisted of memorizing Vedic texts, and in some cases also subsidiary treatises (*vedāṅga*). By the time of the Buddha, Vedic literature was too vast to be memorized by any single person except perhaps the rare genius; it was divided into various branches (*śākhā*) of oral tradition.

Vedic literature contains both verse and prose texts. The oldest corpus of texts, the *Ṛgveda*, is a collection of hymns in verse, arranged in ten 'books' (*maṇḍala*); the six 'family books', *maṇḍala* II–VII, which constitute its kernel, are arranged in order of length, from the shortest to the longest.[7] A hymn is called a *sūkta*, literally '(that which is) well spoken'. The later Vedic texts are mostly in prose. It is generally held, and I agree, that at the time of the Buddha (whenever exactly that was) only the few earliest *Upaniṣads* existed. The

*Upaniṣads* constitute the latest stratum of the *Veda* and are known as its 'conclusion', *anta*, in the logical as well as the purely temporal sense.

I believe that the Buddhist canon has left us more clues that it is modelled on Vedic literature than has been generally recognized. In my view, early Buddhist poems were called *sūkta*, which in Pāli (and other forms of Middle Indo-Aryan) becomes *sutta*, as in *Suttanipāta*. Literally a *sūkta* is synonymous with a *subhāṣita*, something 'well spoken', in this case by the Buddha or one of his immediate disciples; but the word also alludes to the *Veda*. I am of course aware that many centuries later *sutta* was re-Sanskritized as *sūtra*. A *sūtra* is however a recognized genre of Sanskrit literature, a prose text composed with the greatest possible brevity, so that it can normally not be understood without a lengthy commentary. No early Pāli text is anything like that. I would even go further, and tentatively suggest that if Pāli *sutta* can equal Sanskrit *veda*, Pāli *suttanta* can equal Sanskrit *vedānta*; then the prose texts of the Buddha's discourses are the 'conclusions' of the Buddhist sacred literature.

These linguistic remarks are however speculative, and even if they are shown to be wrong, this would not affect my main argument at all. It is a fact that parts of the Pāli Canon are arranged on the Vedic principle of increasing length of units; the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* (parallel to the *Ekottara-āgama*); the *Thera-* and *Therī-gāthās*; the *Jātaka*; and – most interestingly – the poems of a section of the *Suttanipāta*, the *Aṭṭhakavagga*. There is an episode in the Canon[8] in which the Buddha asks a young monk whom he is meeting for the first time to tell him some *Dhamma*; the monk recites the whole *Aṭṭhakavagga* and the Buddha commends him. The text does not specifically say who originally composed the poems of the *Aṭṭhakavagga*; it could be the Buddha himself; it could be the young monk's teacher, Mahākaccāna, who was a reputed preacher; it could be yet other monks; and it could be a combination of these, since not all the poems need be by the same author. But what is clear is that this set of sixteen poems was collected early and arranged on the *Ṛgvedic* principle, by increasing length.

As mentioned above, numbered lists are an important mnemonic device, and they are indeed omni-present in the literature of both early Buddhism and early Jainism. Another such device is redundancy. The earliest Buddhist prose texts are clogged with repetitions. The brahmins went to extraordinary lengths in preserving the *Ṛgveda* by memorizing the words in various patterns. This did not appeal to the Buddhists, probably because of their stress on the meaning of the texts; but the endless redundancies of the patterns of words in the Pāli *Abhidhamma* texts do somewhat recall the Vedic *Kramapāṭha, Jaṭāpāṭha* and *Ghanapāṭha*[9] in their formal character. A third mnemonic device is versification. The stricter the metre, the easier it is to preserve the wording. The *anuṣṭubh*/*vatta* metre is thus less effective for this purpose than the stricter metres in which most of the *Suttanipāta* is composed.

Obviously there was no means of preserving the Buddha's words as he spoke them. They had to be formalized in texts, prose or verse, deliberate compositions which were then committed to memory, and later systematically transmitted to

pupils. Were this not so, they would have been lost, like the teachings of the teachers contemporary to the Buddha who are mentioned in the Canon, notably in the *Sāmaññaphala-suttanta*. The case of Jainism is particularly instructive. According to the Digambara tradition, the oldest texts preserved are not the original canon: that has been lost.[10] It seems to me highly unlikely that such a tradition would have arisen were it not true, whereas one can easily understand the motivation for the opposite view, taken by the Śvetāmbara Jains, that the texts preserved are in fact part of the original canon. All Jains agree that some of their canon was lost at an early stage. The Śvetāmbara tradition divided monks into those who were *jinakappa*, the solitary wandering ascetics striving for liberation in this lifetime, and the *therakappa*,[11] professional monks concerned to preserve the Jain tradition, and in particular the scriptures. This precisely mirrors the distinction introduced into the Buddhist Theravādin Saṅgha, probably in the late first century B.C., between monks who were to undertake the *vipassanādhura*, the duty of meditating and so attaining *nirvāṇa* themselves, and those who undertook the *ganthadhura*, the duty of preserving the books, i.e. the Buddhist scriptures.[12] But here I am running ahead of my story.

My point is that from the first the institution which performed the function of preserving the Buddhist texts must have been the Saṅgha. Whether we choose to consider that initially this function was overt or latent does not matter. Certainly the Buddha's primary conception of the Saṅgha was as an association of men and women trying to reach *nirvāṇa* and creating conditions which facilitated this quest for all of them. But the Saṅgha was a missionary organization too: the first sixty monks were dispatched to preach to whoever would listen.[13] That is of course well known. But somehow scholars have not given much thought to the mechanics of how they would have remembered what to preach, and then how their converts, who had not met the Buddha himself, would have remembered it in their turn. It is my contention that the preservation of the texts required organization, and that the Buddhist laity were never orginized in a way which would have ensured the transmission of texts down the generations.

I must not be misunderstood as saying that only monks and nuns knew texts by heart. What I am saying is that only they were so organized that they could hand them on to future generations. An interesting passage in the *Vinaya*[14] says that a monk may interrupt his rains retreat for up to seven days if a layman or laywoman summons him with the message that he or she knows a text and is afraid it will get lost – in other words, that it needs to be passed on to the Saṅgha. We do not know how the Saṅgha was organized for this purpose in the earliest period. Several times in the Canon monks are referred to as *vinaya-dhara*, *dhamma-dhara* and *mātikādhara*, which means that they had memorized respectively monastic rules, sermons (*suttanta*), or the lists of terms which later developed into the *Abhidhamma* works. But I know of no passage which makes it clear whether these were ever exclusive specialisms. Later monks certainly did specialize in memorizing particular texts or groups of texts,[15] and this apparently continued even after they had been committed to writing in the first century B.C.

According to the introduction to the *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī*, the *Vinayapiṭaka* was entrusted to Upāli and his followers (*nissitaka*) and each of the four *Nikāyas* similarly to an important monk and his followers.[16] Since Buddhaghosa is merely editing the commentaries, which were written down with the Canon, I assume that this statement reflects the way that the Saṅgha was organized for memorizing the texts in the first century B.C. We do not know how much older this division of labour – reminiscent of the brahmin *śākhā* – can be. But the logic of the situation suggests that from the first monks must have specialized, being taught texts first by their own teachers and then by other monks they encountered both in their monasteries and on their travels; and that the Councils (*saṅgāyanā*), better termed Communal Recitations, served the function of systematizing knowledge and perhaps of organizing its further preservation. In fact, the very division of the sermons into the four *Nikāyas* was probably for this purpose, and I suspect that the four *Nikāyas* basically represent four traditions of memorization. It may be significant that in the passage of the *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī* already cited the four *Nikāyas* are referred to as four *saṅgīts* and the *Dīgha-nikāya* as the *Dīghasaṅgīti*.[17] The words *saṅgīti* and *saṅgāyanā* are, of course, synonymous.

The Canon itself has preserved traces of how all this worked, and even shows that the Buddhists were conscious of the contrast in this respect between themselves and the Jains. The *Saṅgīti-suttanta* has it that at the death of Nigaṇṭha Nāthaputta his followers began to disagree about what he had actually preached.[18] Sāriputta makes this the occasion for rehearsing a summary of the Buddha's teaching arranged in numbered lists of increasing length. It does not matter whether the text faithfully records a historical incident (which we can never know for certain); the point is rather that the Buddhists were aware that this kind of systematic rehearsal was necessary if Buddhism was to be preserved as a coherent doctrine and way of life (discipline) and I cannot conceive how it could in fact have survived had such occasions not taken place. In another text[19] the Buddha is reported as saying that four conditions make for the forgetting (*saṃmosa*) and disappearance of the true teaching (*saddhamma*). The first is if monks memorize the texts incorrectly. Another is if learned monks who know the texts do not take care to rehearse others in reciting them.[20]

A corollary of all this is that once meetings of monks (whether or not these correspond to the First and Second Councils of tradition) had decided what was to be memorized, it must have been difficult, if not impossible, to slip a new text into the curriculum. That is not to claim that no change occurred; but the changes must have been mostly unintentional, due to lapses of memory and to the contamination of texts as someone's memory slipped from one text to another. We learn of such a body of authorized texts from the passages[21] in the *Mahāparinibbāna-suttanta* concerning what Rhys Davids translates as the four "Great Authorities" (*mahāpadesa*). Actually this translation is misleading, for the number four refers to the instances of referral to authority, not to the number of authorities. Of those there is but one. When anyone claims to have an authen-

tic text, its authenticity is to be judged simply by seeing whether it harmonizes with the texts (*sutta* and *vinaya*) already current in the Saṅgha. If not, it is to be rejected: the Saṅgha will not try to preserve it.

Under these circumstances, any text which is critical of the current teachings or introduces something which is palpably new has no chances of survival. It is possible that hundreds or even thousands of monks, nuns and Buddhist lay followers had visions or other inspirations which put new teachings into their minds, possible that they composed texts embodying those teachings – but we shall never know. For without writing those texts could not be preserved.

Archaeology has recovered no piece of writing in India which can definitely be dated earlier than the inscriptions of Aśoka. It is however generally agreed that the fact that in Aśokan inscriptions the Brahmī script shows some regional variety proves that it must have been introduced a while earlier. It is *prima facie* probable that writing was first used for two purposes: by businessmen for keeping accounts and by rulers for public administration. This in fact fits what we learn from the *Vinayapiṭaka*.

The *Vinaya* is the only part of the Pāli Canon to mention books or writing. There are mentions in the *Jātaka* book but only in the prose part, which is commentary, not canonical text. It is sometimes said[22] that books are mentioned in the *Dīgha-nikāya*, but that is almost certainly incorrect. The single passage in question is at *Dīgha* III, 94, in the *Aggañña-suttanta*, where brahmins are being lampooned. By a joking pun they as students of the *Veda* are said to be 'non-meditators' (*ajjhāyaka*); they settle near towns and villages and make *ganthe*. Later *gantha* certainly comes to mean a book; but basically it means 'knot'. In the *Suttanipāta*[23] brahmins are said to 'knot together *mantras*' – the words are *mante ganthetvā* – and the reference is to their composing Vedic texts. The metaphor is much the same as that in *sūtra*, the 'stringing together' of a text, and that in *tantra*, in which a text is 'woven'. Though the Rhys Davids translate *ganthe* at *Dīgha* III, 94 as 'books', they do not seem to mean by this books as physical objects, for they quote and correctly translate the commentary on the word: "compiling the three *Vedas* and teaching others to repeat them."[24]

To present the evidence concerning writing in the *Vinayapiṭaka* I can do no better than attempt to summarize what was so admirably said more than a century ago by Rhys Davids and Oldenberg in the introduction to their translations of *Vinaya* texts.[25] "In the first place, there are several passages which confirm in an indisputable manner the existence of the art of writing at the time when the *Vinaya* texts were put into their present shape."[26] There is a reference to a royal notice about an absconding thief.[27] There is a reference to writing as a 'superior craft' (*ukkaṭṭha sippa*).[28] There is a reference to tempting someone to suicide by means of a written message.[29] And though the nuns are forbidden 'animal arts' (*tiracchāna vijjā*), there is no fault in their learning to write. (This last reference[30] is brief and obscure, but my feeling is that Rhys Davids, Oldenberg and Miss Horner have all misinterpreted it and it refers to drawing amulets, something like *yantra*.)[31] "But it is a long step from the use of writing for such

public or private notifications to the adoption of it for the purpose of recording an extensive and sacred literature."[32] At this point Rhys Davids and Oldenberg might have added that brahmins did not write down their scriptures for many centuries after writing came into use among them; but they wished to restrict access to their scriptures to the top three *varṇas*, whereas Buddhists had no desire to keep theirs secret.

> "Had the sacred texts been written down and read, books, manuscripts, and the whole activity therewith connected, must have necessarily played a very important part in the daily life of the members of the Buddhist Order."[33]

The *Vinaya* mentions every item of property allowed to a monk and every utensil found in a monastery, but it never mentions either manuscripts or writing materials of any kind. But on the other hand there are several references to the need to acquire a text by learning it orally.

The Pāli commentaries record that the texts were first written down when it was found that there was only one monk alive who still knew a canonical text, the *Mahāniddesa*.[34] We have seen above that earlier when it seemed that there was only one person who still knew a text a monk was enjoined to interrupt his rains retreat to go and learn it. In the first century B.C. a surer technique was put to use.

The Pāli Canon (with commentaries) was finally written down for fear of losing it. Maybe it is a corollary of this fact that the *Pātimokkha* as such is not a canonical text. It is of course embedded in the *Suttavibhaṅga*. But maybe no need was felt to make manuscripts of the code which every monk had to know by heart. A text in constant use is in less danger of being forgotten.

There has long been a general consensus that the earliest surviving Mahāyāna texts go back to the second or first century B.C. This chronology, albeit imprecise, clearly fits the time when writing came more into use and it was possible to commit large texts to writing. Maybe this had something to do with better materials. To discuss in detail the use of writing for brahmanical Sanskrit works is both beyond my competence and unnecessary here, but I may remark that Patañjali's *Mahābhāṣya* is clearly a written, not an oral text, and it is commonly dated to the second century B.C., on rather strong evidence.

It may be objected that written works too may perish, and are likely to do so unless an institution guards them. To this I would agree; but it is not an objection to my hypothesis. Certainly the great majority of Mahāyāna – indeed, of *all* later Buddhist – works were lost in their original versions in Indian languages. But many did survive long enough to be translated into Chinese and/or Tibetan, and that is all that my hypothesis requires. A single manuscript in a monastic library, studied by no one, could be picked up and read, even translated, by a curious browser or visiting scholar.

This ends the real argument for my hypothesis, so that my article could end

here. But it would be a pity not to mention that the early Mahāyāna texts themselves offer what might be seen as corroborative evidence. It is well known that the *Lotus Sūtra* commends the enshrinement of written scriptures in *stūpas* as the equivalent of corporeal relics. Dr Gregory Schopen has shown[35] that early Mahāyāna texts, even before the *Lotus Sūtra*, have a veritable 'cult of the book'. In those early texts, he writes, "the merit derived from the cult of the book is always expressed in terms of its comparative superiority to that derived from the *stūpa*/relic cult."[36] By book here is meant manuscript; and Schopen shows that the text typically prescribes and glorifies its own worship in written form. Schopen's otherwise brilliant article is slightly marred by an occasional failure to distinguish 'the book' as a written object from texts in general; and I think he may lay too much stress on the localization of the cult. My feeling is that these texts preserve a sense of wonder at this marvellous invention which permits an individual's opinions or experiences to survive whether or not anyone agrees or cares. In a sense they are celebrating their own survival. *Scripta manent* goes the Latin tag: "Writings survive." But perhaps only the Buddhists wrote panegyrics on it.

I should perhaps conclude by remarking that although there are several other theories current about the origin of the Mahāyāna, my hypothesis does not, so far as I am aware, either refute or corroborate any of them, since it approaches the problem on a different level. To put it differently: the other theories mainly say what is different about Mahāyāna, but they do not say why that different form of religion should have (apparently) arisen when it did. My hypothesis, I repeat, is that different forms of Buddhism may have arisen earlier, but we shall never know, for they were doomed to be ephemeral. I am not siding with those who claim that the Mahāyāna represents an aspect of the Buddha's teaching which was somehow preserved 'underground', maybe among the laity, till it surfaced in the texts we have; on the contrary, my argument is precisely that such a thing is impossible.

The most widespread view of the matter is that the Mahāyāna is the Buddhism of the laity. By and large I disagree with that theory. I hope to show in other publications[37] that it rests on a misconception of what it was to be a Buddhist layman in ancient India. I strongly agree, of course, that the earliest Buddhism was primarily a religion of the Saṅgha; and that was for many reasons, not merely for the one with which this paper has been concerned. The other reasons remained valid even after the introduction of writing for recording scriptures. But certainly there were laymen – albeit a small minority – who knew how to write, so that it became technically possible for a layman to write down his own religious views. Whether there were any institutions other than Buddhist monasteries which were likely to preserve such writings is another matter.

## Notes

* The editor of the present publication would like to express his gratitude to Professor Egaku Mayeda for permission to include here this paper which has been originally published in the *Journal of Pali and Buddhist Studies* I, Nagoya, March 1988, 29–46.

1 L.S. Cousins, "Pali Oral Literature", in P.T. Denwood and A. Piatigorsky, eds., *Buddhist Studies Ancient and Modern*, London, 1983, 1–11.

2 *Ibid.*, 9.

3 *Ibid.*, 5.

4 I, 12: *saṃbandha-vacana-mattaṃ . . . pakkhipitvā*. Literally means "only interpolating connecting words"; this is less than the narrative items to which Cousins is referring. The text would not go so far in imputing their own veracity. But the passage does make the essential distinction between what is *Buddha-vacana*, "the words of the Buddha", and may therefore not be tampered with, and what is not.

5 J.D. Smith, "*The Singer or the Song*: A Reassessment of Lord's 'Oral Theory' ", *Man* (N.S.) 12, 1977, 141–53. It would be hard to exaggerate the importance of Smith's observations for the study of oral literature in general and early Indian texts in particular. On analyzing his recordings of performances of an oral epic by performers who had never met, Smith found that though they even varied in metre, they shared a common nucleus which conveyed all the important meaning. When the words of this nucleus are put together, they form a metrical text, and "it is easy to demonstrate that [that text] exists in what is, in essence, a single unitary form memorised by all its performers" (page 146). This nuclear text shows only unimportant variations, in such matters as order, grammar and use of synonyms (page 147). Yet what is extraordinary is that this nuclear text is never presented as a unity, but only word by word or phrase by phrase, each fragment being embedded in "large quantities of semantically lightweight verbal material" (page 145). This means that though what is remembered is basically metrical, it is presented in a form which destroys that metre. This shows how complex the relation between verse and prose could become.

6 *Manusmṛti*, III, 1. The text there refers to the three *Vedas*; but it was presumably only those who aspired to be schoolteachers who attempted that feat.

7 ". . . books II–VII, if allowance is made for later additions, form a series of collections which contain a successively increasing number of hymns." Arthur A. Macdonell, *A History of Sanskrit Literature*, reprinted in Delhi, 1965, 34.

8 *Vinaya*, I, 196 = *Udāna* V, 6. In the latter passage it says that the monk recited sixteen poems, in the *Vinaya* merely that he recited 'all'.

9 Macdonell, *op. cit.*, 42.

10 P.S. Jaini, *The Jaina Path of Purification*, Berkeley and Delhi, 1979, 51.

11 Colette Caillat, *Les expiations dans le rituel ancien des religieux jaina*, Paris, 1965, 50. In contrast to the ancient tradition of the solitary ascetic, followed by the *jinakappa*, the *therakappa* monks were not allowed to be alone, or normally even in pairs. Caillat does not relate this to the question of preserving the tradition; I owe this idea to a conversation with Will Johnson.

12 Walpola Rahula, *History of Buddhism in Ceylon: the Anuradhapura Period*, Colombo, 1956, 158–61.

13 *Vinaya*, I, 21.

14 *Ibid.*, 140–41.

15 Details in E.W. Adikaram, *Early History of Buddhism in Ceylon*, Migoda, 1946, chapter 3.

16 *Vinaya*, I, 13, 15.

17 *Ibid.*, I, 14.

18 *Dīgha-nikāya*, III, 209–210. The same passage occurs at III, 117–18, and *Majjhima*, II, 243–44.

19 *Aṅguttara*, II, 147.
20 *Ye te bhikkhū bahussutā āgatāgamā dhammadharā vinayadharā mātikādharā te na sakkacca suttantaṃ paraṃ vācenti tesaṃ accayena chinnamūlako suttanto hoti apaṭisaraṇo.*
21 *Dīgha-nikāya*, II, 123–26.
22 e.g., by Schopen in the article cited below, p. 171, n. 46.
23 *Suttanipāta*, 302 and 306.
24 T.W. Rhys Davids and C.A.F. Rhys Davids, trans., *Dialogues of the Buddha*, Part III, London, 1921, 90.
25 T.W. Rhys Davids and H. Oldenberg, *Vinaya Texts*, Part I, SBE XIII, Oxford, 1881.
26 Rhys Davids and Oldenburg, *op. cit.*, xxxii.
27 *Vinaya*, I, 43.
28 *Ibid.*, IV, 7. This passage is not referred to by Rhys Davids and Oldenberg.
29 *Ibid.*, III, 76.
30 *Ibid.*, IV, 305.
31 The text unhelpfully glosses *tiracchāna vijjā* as "whatever is external, not beneficial" (*yaṃ kiñci bāhirakaṃ anatthasaṃhitaṃ*). If she learns it word by word (or line by line?) (*padena*) each word (or line) constitutes an offence; if syllable by syllable, each syllable. But there is no offence in learning *lekhaṃ, dhāraṇaṃ* or *guttatthāya parittaṃ*. Of these three exemptions, only the last is clear: it means "a (specific Buddhist) text recited for protection". The second Horner translates as "what is memorised", but that makes no sense at all, for whatever she learnṣ is presumably memorized. As it is next to *parittā* I assume it is also something like a protective spell, and so the equivalent of Sanskrit *dhāraṇī* (a word not attested in Pāli, so that it is unclear whether one should emend to *dhāraṇiṃ* or just assume that the Pāli equivalent is *dhāraṇā*). That leaves *lekhā*. My general interpretation is that what is forbidden in general is magic, but specific kinds of white magic are permitted.
32 Rhys Davids and Oldenberg, *op. cit.*, xxxiii.
33 *Ibid.*,
34 Rahula, *op. cit.*, 158.
35 G. Schopen, "The Phrase 'pṛthivīpradeśaś caityabhūto bhavet' in the Vajracchedikā: Notes on the Cult of the Book in Mahāyāna", *IIJ*, 17, 1975, 147–81.
36 Schopen, *op. cit.*, 169. As Schopen goes on to show, this evidence seems to refute the theory that early Mahāyāna is specifically associated with the cult of corporeal relics; if anything, it suggests the opposite.
37 For instance in *Theravada Buddhism: A Social History from Ancient Benares to Modern Colombo*, London, 1988, 74–76; and in "Comment une religion se définit ellemême: le bouddhisme", *Le Grand Atlas des Religions*, Encyclopaedia Universalis, Paris, 1988, 36–7.

# 36

# *BUDDHĀNUSMṚTI* IN THE *PRATYUTPANNABUDDHASAṂMUKHĀVASTHITASAMĀDHI-SŪTRA*[1]

*Paul M. Harrison*

Source: *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 6 (1978): 35–57.

## 1. Introduction

Mahāyāna Buddhism is often thought of as a heterogeneous movement embracing two main streams: on the one hand the Prajñāpāramitā, the Perfection of Wisdom, a tradition of self-emancipation through insight, perpetuated in the Far East by Ch'an (Zen); and on the other, the Pure Land, a tradition of salvation by faith in the grace and power of certain personifications of the Buddha-principle. The relationship between these two traditions, which, it must be noted in passing, by no means encompass the entire range of the Mahāyāna, remains problematical. However widely they diverged in later times, there is no good reason for supposing that they were not a good deal closer during the formative centuries of the Mahāyāna. Although that movement was from the outset undeniably multi-faceted, its literature betrays little sense of the mutual opposition of 'faith' and 'works' which is evident, for instance, both in Christian writings at the time of the birth of Protestantism and in the polemics of later Japanese Pure Land masters. Therefore, what was the precise nature of the connection between the two traditions, and were there tensions involved?

The surviving evidence is both copious and fragmentary: we have at our disposal a large body of literary remains in several languages, but there is little else left to interpret. It is especially difficult to obtain an overall view of the everyday religious practices and aspirations of members of the Buddhist Sangha around the time when the Mahāyāna was taking shape in India. A thorough examination of the extant sūtra and śāstra literature should contribute towards a clearer picture of things, but a continuing problem in this regard is excessive reliance on a single text or body of texts, or on a single theme within a text. The study of noses, however hotly pursued, will never yield an accurate understanding of the entire face. It is likely that Buddhists of all persuasions had a complete corpus of scripture at their disposal, and a correspondingly many-sided set of beliefs to

accompany their moral observances, meditational development, cult-practices, and scriptural studies. If so, then how are we to place a work like, say, the *Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha*? We can only begin to approach the problem by attempting to define the possible relationships among the surviving examples of Buddhist literary output, supplementing the internal evidence with such clues as may be garnered from art history, inscriptions, the records of Chinese travellers, and so on. Any study of the statements of a given Buddhist text must progress with the caveat that we know little or nothing of the context in which that text was used. Nevertheless, by examining the stones we may be able to reconstruct the settings.

The present paper is intended as a small contribution to that endeavour, for we shall examine one text, the *Pratyutpanna-buddha-saṃmukhāvasthita-samādhi-sūtra* (hereafter: *Pratyutpanna-sūtra*), which furnishes certain indications of a relationship between the two traditions mentioned above, the Prajñāpāramitā and the Pure Land.

## 2. Buddhānusmṛti

One of the basic features of Pure Land practice is *buddhānusmṛti* (Chinese: *nien-fo*; Japanese *nembutsu*). As far as we can tell, various forms of *anusmṛti* (literally, 'recollection', 'remembrance', and, by extension, 'calling to mind', 'keeping in mind'; cf. *smṛti*, commonly translated as 'mindfulness') had been part of general Buddhist practice since the earliest times, and are amply attested in the Pāli *Nikāyas* and the Chinese translations of the Sanskrit *Āgamas*. For example, a sixfold scheme is found detailed in the *Aṅguttara-Nikāya* (v. 328–332) involving *anussati* directed towards the Buddha, the Dhamma, the Saṅgha, *sīla* (moral observance), *cāga* (liberality), and the *devatā* (gods). A tenfold scheme also exists (*Aṅguttara* i, 30, also i, 42) which adds four more possible objects of *anussati* or *sati*, namely, *ānāpāna* (breathing in and out), *maraṇa* (death), *kāyagatā* (bodily things), and *upasama* (calming).

Certain passages dealing with *anusmṛti*, however, are found in the *Āgamas* which have no equivalent in Pāli. One of these is the story of Vīrasena, a wealthy but selfish householder of Vaiśālī (*Ekottarāgama* XLI, 5; *Taishō* Vol. II, pp. 739b10–740a24), which relates how the Buddha predicted that Vīrasena would die after seven days, and that, unless he entered the Order before his time was up, he would surely be reborn in one of the hells. The repentant householder took the Buddha at his word, and by assiduous practice of the ten *anusmṛtis* managed to win rebirth in one of the heavens. After this happy ending the Buddha remarks to Ānanda: 'Should a being practise the ten *anusmṛtis* with uninterrupted faith, even if only for the time it takes to milk a cow, then his merit will be immeasurable.'

Elsewhere the *Ekottarāgama* gives more detailed instruction on the practice of the ten *anusmṛtis*, and these passages too are not found in the Pāli *Nikāyas* (see below). One might deduce from this that the Sarvāstivādins (or whatever

school it was to whom the Āgamas belonged[2]) set more store by the practice of the *anusmṛtis*, but this hypothesis requires more evidence to support it. In any case, one salient feature of both the *Nikāyas* and *Āgamas* is the fact that no one particular *anusmṛti* is valued above the others, whereas in the surviving Mahāyāna literature it is clear that only the first three traditional objects of *anusmṛti* (Buddha, Dharma, Saṅgha) were accorded any importance, and that among these three *buddhānusmṛti* was pre-eminent.

If as we may suppose, the Buddha was at first thought of as a great teacher and exemplar, then after his death the systematic recollection of his superior qualities and physical attributes would have been a natural aid to those who in their own turn were endeavouring to acquire those same qualities. With the passage of time the Buddha became less an object of emulation and more an object of devotion, growing in stature as memories faded. As much as the corpus of his teachings (the Dharma) was preserved, transmitted, and inexorably enlarged, his followers must still have felt keenly how unfortunate it was to be deprived of his actual presence. Mahāyāna sūtras contain many passages describing the rarity of a Tathāgata's appearance, and the great good fortune of those born in an age blessed by an Awakened. One's presence. It is not too difficult to conceive how *buddhānusmṛti* was pressed into service in such circumstances, until practices were evolved that entailed not merely a reminiscence of the Buddha, but an imaginative evocation of his presence by means of structured meditative procedures. One *Āgama* passage (*Ekottarāgama* III, 1; *Taishō* Vol. II, p. 554a7–b9) clearly propounds a *buddhānusmṛti* that has developed to this point, and is far more detailed than anything found in the *Nikāyas*:

> Thus have I heard. At one time the Buddha resided at the *ārāma* of Anāthapiṇḍada in the Jetavana at Śrāvastī. At that time the Lord addressed the *bhikṣus*:
>
> 'You should practise one dharma, you should propagate one dharma, and when you have practised one dharma you shall have renown, achieve the great fruit, attain all good, acquire the taste of nectar [*amṛta*], and reach the station of the unconditioned; then you shall achieve magic power, eliminate distractions of thought, attain the fruit of the *śramaṇa*, and arrive at Nirvāṇa. What is the one dharma? Namely, *buddhānusmṛti*.'
>
> The Buddha addressed the *bhikṣus*:
>
> 'How does one practise *buddhānusmṛti*, so that one then has renown, achieves the great fruit, . . . and arrives at Nirvāṇa?'
>
> [The *bhikṣus* entreat the Buddha to explain how.]
>
> The Lord said:
>
> 'A *bhikṣu* correct in body and correct in mind sits crosslegged and focuses his thought in front of him. Without entertaining any other thought he earnestly calls to mind [*anusmṛ-*] the Buddha. He contemplates the image of the Tathāgata without taking his eyes off it. Not

taking his eyes off it he then calls to mind the qualities of the Tathāgata – the Tathāgata's body made of *vajra*, endowed with the ten Powers [*bala*], and by virtue of the four Assurances [*vaiśāradya*] intrepid in assemblies; the Tathāgata's countenance, upright and peerless, so that one never tires of beholding it; his perfection of the moral qualities [*śīla*] resembling *vajra* in indestructibility, like *vaiḍūrya* in flawless purity; the Tathāgata's *samādhis* never diminishing, calm, ever tranquil, without any extraneous thought, having stilled arrogance, brutality, and the emotions, having eliminated thoughts of desire, of anger, of delusion, apprehension, and all meshes of the net; the Tathāgata's body of wisdom [*prajñā*], its knowledge unlimited and unobstructed; the Tathāgata's body perfected in liberation [*vimukti*], done with all destinies and no longer subject to rebirth with such words as: "I must again plunge into Saṃsāra!"; the Tathāgata's body, a city of the knowledge and vision of liberation [*vimukti-jñāna-darśana*], knowing the faculties of others and whether or not they shall be liberated, whether, dying here, being reborn there, they shall go on revolving in Saṃsāra until Saṃsāra ends, knowing them all, those who possess liberation and those who do not.'

'This is the practice of *buddhānusmṛti*, by which one has renown, achieves the great fruit, ... and arrives at Nirvāṇa. Therefore, *bhikṣus*, you should always meditate on, and never depart from, *buddhānusmṛti*; then you shall acquire these goodly qualities. Thus, *bhikṣus*, should you undertake this training.'

At that time the *bhikṣus*, hearing what the Buddha had expounded, accepted it with rejoicing.

In this passage we see that the attention of the practitioner is to be directed towards both the physical appearance of the Buddha and his moral and mental attributes (presented under the traditional rubrics of *śīla-samādhi-prajñā-vimukti-vimuktijñānadarśana*), although we must remember that to Buddhists these two are inseparably linked. The word *hsing* ('figure', 'form', 'appearance') I have translated 'image', taking it to imply a mental image. It is not clear at what time actual images (pictures or sculptures) of the Buddha began to be produced, but we do know that at first it was common practice not to construct likenesses of the Buddha but to represent him symbolically, e.g. by his footprint. No doubt the gradual apotheosis of the Buddha brought about a change in this situation, and, as the *Pratyutpanna-sūtra* itself shows, Buddha-images were already in use around the beginning of the second century.[3]

Chapter Four of the sūtra lists sixteen dharmas by which a bodhisattva obtains the *pratyutpanna-samādhi*. One of them is: *tiṅ ṅe 'dzin 'di 'dod pas de bźin gśegs pa'i sku gzugs byed du gźugs ste / tha na ri mor yaṅ 'drir 'jug pa*, i.e. 'through desire for this *samādhi* causing an image of the Tathāgata to be made, or just having a picture painted' [4D; *PE* 106–4–8]. Since the following dharma

enjoins the perpetuation of the *Pratyutpanna-sūtra* by copying it and donating the resulting book, it is likely that the construction of Buddha-images appears here merely as one item in a series of merit-producing activities, but we cannot discount the possibility that, even at that time, such images were also intended as aids to visualisation.

## 3. The Mahāyāna

The rise of the Mahāyāna involved many developments germane to the question of *buddhānusmṛti* which we can only sketch briefly at this point. One set of them revolves around the extension of the idea of the one historical Buddha to encompass the notion of many Buddhas, not only in the past and future (as can be seen even in the Hīnayāna literature) but in the present as well. Whereas formerly it was held that only one Buddha could exist at a time, now countless Buddhas were believed to exist, each one in his own world, or 'Buddha-field' (*buddhakṣetra*). This multiplicity of Buddhas is of course achieved by a simple proliferation of Śākyamunis – that is, all Buddhas everywhere resemble the historical Buddha in that, by and large, they follow the same course, undergo the same experiences, acquire the same attainments, and perform the same services to the begins in their sphere of influence. Only the names and the minor details admit of an endless variety. Certain of these present Buddhas became more popular than others, for reasons that are still far from clear – Akṣobhya in the east and Amitābha/Amitāyus in the west being two of them – and rebirth in their *buddhakṣetras* came to be regarded as an especially desirable reward for meritorious conduct. Such a blessing, however, did not by any means follow automatically from virtue and faith: to acquire it one had to make the necessary arrangements, as it were, with the Buddhas concerned, one had somehow to contact them. Meditation, of a sort, provided the means, and in this way the Buddhas of the Present became in their own right objects of *anusmṛti* as well as objects of worship.

Side by side with the emergence of the belief in a universe teeming with Buddhas and of the consequent cult-practices directed towards them, the philosophy of the Prajñāpāramitā (hereafter Pp.) was also evolving. It attacked the qualified realism of the prevalent Sarvāstivādins and held that all dharmas (among many other meanings, 'dharma' denotes the basic unit of Buddhist ontology) are essentially empty (*śūnya*) and devoid of objective reality or 'own-being' (*svabhāva*). The Mahāyāna in general criticised the Hīnayāna objective of arhathood followed by Nirvāṇa as being inferior to true Buddhahood, to supreme and perfect awakening (*anuttara-samyak-saṃbodhi*). The bodhisattva was one who rejected the easy way out and pursued his course to the very end, returning again and again to the world of Saṃsāra to rescue his fellow-beings. The proponents of the Pp. went further, claiming that this was an appearance only, for, since everything was void, there was no substantial difference between Nirvāṇa and Saṃsāra, between Buddhas and ordinary people.

Now how did followers of the Mahāyāna square the Pp. and its doctrine of Emptiness (*Śūnyatā*) with the desire for actual rebirth in the *buddhakṣetras* of various Buddhas, *buddhakṣetras* which were in fact equivalent to paradises in the range of sensual and material enjoyments offered? On the face of it, the two branches of the Mahāyāna went their own way, the *Sukhāvatīvyūha* and related sūtras hardly mentioning *Śūnyatā* while the Pp. sūtras in their turn pass over in silence the question of rebirth in Sukhāvatī and similar worlds.[4] Accordingly, *buddhānusmṛti* or, more generally, encounters in meditation or otherwise with Buddhas, has quite different functions in the Pp. and Pure Land texts. The *Pratyutpanna-sūtra*, however, goes some way towards bridging this gap, for it propounds *buddhānusmṛti* in terms of the doctrine of *Śūnyatā* and at the same time refers to Amitābha. Although there is no hard evidence for it ever having had a great following in India,[5] the *Pratyutpanna-sūtra* nevertheless indicates the sort of approach likely to have been taken by followers of the Mahāyāna anxious to have the best of both worlds, however empty they might be.

## 4. Texts of the *Pratyutpanna-sūtra*

The Sanskrit text of the *Pratyutpanna-sūtra* has not survived, except for one small fragment found at Khadalik in Central Asia.[6] We do, however, possess a Tibetan translation made before the beginning of the ninth century and revised by Śākyaprabha and Ratnarakṣita,[7] and four Chinese translations which pose complicated text-historical problems which have not yet been untangled. For the time being the Chinese translations may be arranged in chronological order as follows, but it must be emphasised that this scheme is provisional. (i) *Taishō* 418, *Pan-chou san-mei ching* (= *Pratyutpanna-samādhi-sūtra*) in three *chüan*, translated by Lokakṣema in 179 A.D. Two redactions exist:

(i) a, found in the Korean edition of the Chinese Tripiṭaka. In the first six chapters (i.e., the material which corresponds to the first six chapters of the Tibetan translation) the *gāthās* are rendered in prose, thereafter in verse;
(i) b, found in the Tripiṭaka editions of the Sung, Yüan, and Ming dynasties. The prose is with some variations the same as in (i) a, but the *gāthās* are rendered in verse throughout.

At this stage it would appear that somebody with access to a Sanskrit manuscript took Lokakṣema's early version, in which the *gāthās* had been characteristically rendered in prose, and revising the prose passages only slightly retranslated the *gāthās* into verse. Somehow the Korean edition has preserved Lokakṣema's original version, but only for the first six chapters.

(ii) *Taishō* 419, *Pa-p'o p'u-sa ching* (= *Bhadrapāla-bodhisattva-sūtra*) in one *chüan*. Anonymous. Probably late Han or soon after. Contains only the first six chapters, a fact which, taken with the anomalies of *Taishō* 418, might

lead one to suppose that in Han times a six chapter version of the *Pratyutpanna-sūtra* was in circulation. But more evidence is needed.

(iii) *Taishō* 417, *Pan-chou san-mei ching*, in one *chüan*. Attributed to Lokakṣema, but undoubtedly an anonymous abridgement of (i) b, into which a long versified passage has been interpolated (*Taishō* Vol. 13, p. 898b 13–899a8).

(iv) *Taishō* 416, *Ta-fang-teng ta-chi ching hsien-hu fen* (= *Mahāvaipulya-mahāsaṃnipāta-sūtra-bhadrapāla-parivarta*), in five *chüan*, translated by Jñānagupta *et al.* 594–595 A.D. Although, as one might expect, this translation comes nearest to the Tibetan version in fullness and readability, there are certain differences, the most notable being the total omission of those chapters (10, 12) which deal with women practitioners.

The fact that the *Pratyutpanna-sūtra* has been translated three times into Chinese, and that the earliest of those three translations has itself been revised and subsequently abridged testifies in some measure to its popularity in China. What is more important is the date of Lokakṣema's version, which puts it among the first Mahāyāna sūtras introduced into China, Interestingly enough, the date given (second year of Kuang-ho, eighth day of the tenth month) is the same as one of those given for Lokakṣema's translation of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā*; both these translations are also the only two unhesitatingly attributed to Lokakṣema by Tao-an.[8]

## 5. The pratyutpanna-samādhi

The *pratyutpanna-buddha-saṃmukhāvasthita-samādhi* signifies, literally, the *samādhi* of the one who stands (*avasthita*) face-to-face with, or in the presence of (*saṃmukha*), the present (*pratyutpanna*) Buddhas. The common formula found throughout the Tibetan translation, viz. *da ltar gyi saṅs rgyas mṅon sum du bźugs pa'i byaṅ chub sems dpa'i tiṅ ṅe 'dzin*, points also to a Sanskrit *pratyutpanna-buddha-saṃmukhāvasthita-bodhisattva-samādhi*, i.e. the *samādhi* of the bodhisattva who stands face-to-face with the Buddhas of the present. In this paper we shall refer to it simply as the *pratyutpanna-samādhi*.

What in fact in this *samādhi*? In a literature often surprisingly short on concrete instruction and long on self-glorification, the *Pratyutpanna-sūtra* stands out for the richness of its didactic content. Directions for the practice of the *samādhi* are first given in Chapter Three, various points being amplified in subsequent chapters.

> *bzaṅ skyoṅ / da ltar gyi saṅs rgyas mṅon sum du bźugs pa źes bya ba'i tiṅ ṅe 'dzin de yaṅ gaṅ źe na / bzaṅ skyoṅ / de la dge sloṅ ṅam / dge sloṅ ma 'am / dge bsñen nam / dge bsñen ma tshul khrims yoṅs su rdzogs par spyod par 'gyur la / des gcig pu dben par soṅ ste 'dug nas 'di sñam du / bcom ldan 'das de bźin gśegs pa dgra bcom pa yaṅ dag*

*par rdzogs pa'i saṅs rgyas tshe dpag med de phyogs gaṅ rol na gnas te 'tsho źiṅ gźes la chos kyaṅ ston ciṅ bźugs / sñam du sems bskyed par bya'o // des ji skad du thos pa'i rnam pas saṅs rgyas kyi źiṅ 'di nas nub phyogs logs su saṅs rgyas kyi źiṅ bye ba phrag 'bum 'das pa na 'jig rten gyi khams bde ba can na bcom ldan 'das de bźin gśegs pa dgra bcom pa yaṅ dag par rdzogs pa'i saṅs rgyas tshe dpag med de da ltar byaṅ chub sems dpa'i tshogs kyis yoṅs su bskor ciṅ mdun du bdar te bźugs so // 'tsho'o // gźes so // chos kyaṅ ston to / sñam du yid la byed de / des kyaṅ sems ma g-yeṅs pas de bźin gśegs pa yid la byed do //*

[3A; *PE* Vol. 32, 104–4–8 to 5–4].

What, Bhadrapāla,[9] is that *samādhi* called the *pratyutpanna-buddha-saṃmukhāvasthita*? In that regard, Bhadrapāla, a *bhikṣu* or *bhikṣuṇī*, an *upāsika* or *upāsikā*, when he has carried out the moral precepts [*śīla*] completely, should go alone to a secluded place and, seating himself, conceive the thought: 'In which direction does the Lord, the Tathāgata, Arhat, Samyaksaṃbuddha Amitāyus dwell, live, reside, and teach the Dharma?' He reflects [*manasi-kṛ-*] in accordance with what he has heard: 'One hundred thousand *koṭis* of *buddhakṣetras* west of this *buddhakṣetra*, in the world-system [*lokadhātu*] Sukhāvatī, the Lord, the Tathāgata, Arhat, Samyaksaṃbuddha Amitāyus at present dwells, lives, resides, and teaches the Dharma, surrounded and attended by a host of bodhisattvas;[10]' and with undistracted thought [*avikṣiptacittena*] he concentrates [*manasi-kṛ-*] on the Tathāgata.

[3A; *PE* Vol. 32, 104–4–8 to 5–4]

*. . . byaṅ chub sems dpa' khyim pa 'am rab tu byuṅ ba yaṅ ruṅ gcig pu dben par soṅ ste 'dug la / de bźin gśegs pa dgra bcom pa yaṅ dag par rdzogs pa'i saṅs rgyas tshe dpag med ji skad du thos pa'i rnam pas yid la byas te / tshul khrims kyi phuṅ po la skyon med ciṅ dran pa g-yeṅ ba med par ñin źag gcig gam / gñis sam / gsum mam / bźi 'am / lṅa 'am /drug gam / ñin źag bdun du yid la bya'o // de gal te ñin źag bdun du sems mi g-yeṅ bar de bźin gśegs pa tshe dpag med yid la byed na / de ñin źag bdun yoṅs su tshaṅ ste 'das nas / bcom ldan 'das de bźin gśegs pa tshe dpag med mthoṅ ṅo // de gal te ñin mo bcom ldan 'das de ma mthoṅ na / de ñal ba'i rmi lam du bcom ldan 'das de bźin gśegs pa tshe dpag med de'i źal ston to //*

. . . a bodhisattva, whether he is a householder or one who has gone forth [*pravrajita*], when he has gone alone to a secluded place and seated himself, after concentrating on the Tathāgata, Arhat, Samyaksaṃbuddha Amitāyus in accordance with what he has heard, then faultless in the mass of the precepts and undistracted in mindfulness [*smṛti*] should he concentrate for one day and night, for two, three, four, five, six, or seven days and nights. If he concentrates on the

Tathāgata Amitāyus with undistracted thought for seven days and nights, then when seven days and nights have elapsed he shall see the Lord, the Tathāgata Amitāyus. If he does not see that Lord by day, then in a dream while sleeping the face of the Lord, the Tathāgata Amitāyus will appear.

[3B; *PE* 104–5–7 to 105–1–2]

*... byaṅ chub sems dpa' de lha'i mig thob pas de bźin gśegs pa mthoṅ ba yaṅ ma yin / lha'i rna ba'i khams thob pas dam pa'i chos ñan pa yaṅ ma yin / rdzu 'phrul gyi stobs thob pas 'jig rten gyi khams der skad cig tu 'gro ba yaṅ ma yin gyi / bzaṅ skyoṅ / byaṅ chub sems dpa' de 'jig rten gyi khams 'di ñid na gnas bźin du / bcom ldan 'das de bźin gśegs pa tshe dpag med de mthoṅ źiṅ bdag ñid 'jig rten gyi khams de na 'dug pa sñam du śes la / chos kyaṅ ñan to // 'chad pa thos nas kyaṅ chos de dag kun 'dzin to // kun chub par byed do // 'dzin par byed do // bcom ldan 'das de bźin gśegs pa dgra bcom pa yaṅ dag par rdzogs pa'i saṅs rgyas tshe dpag med de la bkur stir byed do // bla mar byed do // ri mor byed do // mchod par byed do // byaṅ chub sems dpa' de tiṅ ṅe 'dzin de las laṅs nas kyaṅ ji skad du thos pa daṅ / ji ltar bzuṅ ba daṅ / ji ltar kun chub par byas pa'i chos de dag gźan dag la yaṅ rgya cher yaṅ dag par 'chad do //*

... that bodhisattva does not see the Tathāgata through obtaining the divine eye; he does not hear the True Dharma through obtaining the range of the divine ear; nor does he go to that world-system in an instant through obtaining magical powers – Bhadrapāla, while remaining in this very world-system that bodhisattva sees the Lord, the Tathāgata Amitāyus; and conceiving himself to be in that world-system he also hears the Dharma. Having heard their exposition he accepts, masters, and retains those Dharmas. He worships, venerates, honours, and reveres the Lord, the Tathāgata, Arhat, Samyaksaṃbuddha Amitāyus. After he has emerged from that *samādhi* that bodhisattva also expounds widely to others those Dharmas as he has heard, retained and mastered them.

[3C; *PE* 105–1–5 to 2–1]

In these three passages the basic features of the *pratyutpanna-samādhi* are set forth. It should be noted first of all that although we have here the earliest *datable* literary reference to Amitāyus (Amitābha) and his *buddhakṣetra* Sukhāvatī, it is quite clear from other passages in the sūtra (see e.g. 5B; *PE* 107–1–8 to 2–8) that he is employed only as an example, and that the object of the *samādhi* can be any Buddha or number of Buddhas, in whatever direction their *buddhakṣetras* may lie. It is nonetheless interesting to speculate on the reason why Amitāyus was in fact chosen as the example, since he is the only present

Buddha to be named in the *Pratyutpanna-sūtra*. One can only suppose that by the time this work was composed there was already a well-developed and wide-spread cult of Amitābha, to whose followers the author (or authors) of the *Pratyutpanna-śūtra* hoped to appeal. However, we shall have further occasion to discuss the author's motives.

We may note in passing that strict moral observance is given as a prerequisite for performing the *samādhi*. In fact, as much of the *Pratyutpanna-sūtra* is given over to enlarging upon desirable moral qualities as is devoted to expounding correct philosophical attitudes. Particularly significant in this regard are Chapters Nine to Twelve, which deal in turn with the requirements for bodhisattvas who have gone forth from the household life (i.e. Mahāyāna *bhikṣus*), Mahāyāna *bhikṣuṇīs*, householder bodhisattvas (i.e. Mahāyāna *upāsakas*), and Mahāyāna *upāsikās*.

During the actual practice of the *samādhi* one should be alone and in a secluded and quiet place. It would appear from the passage quoted above (3B) that the visualisation should be sustained from one to seven days, and although a later chapter mentions a three-month period, it is by no means clear whether or not this refers to a preliminary practice:

> *bzaṅ skyoṅ / gźan yaṅ chos bźi daṅ ldan na / byaṅ chub sems dpa' sems dpa' chen po tiṅ ṅe 'dzin 'di 'thob bo // bźi gaṅ źe na / 'di lta ste / zla ba gsum gyi bar du se gol brdab pa tsam yaṅ bdag gi 'du śes mi skyed pa daṅ / zla ba gsum gyi bar du se gol brdab pa tsam yaṅ rmugs pa daṅ gñid kyis mi non pa daṅ / bśaṅ ba daṅ gci ba byed pa ma gtogs par zla ba gsum gyi bar du brtson 'grus brtsams te 'chag pa la źugs nas sa la mi 'dug pa . . .*
>
> Further, Bhadrapāla, if he possesses four dharmas the bodhisattva mahāsattva obtains this *samādhi*. What are the four? Namely (1) for three months not giving rise to the notion of 'self', even for the time it takes to snap the fingers; (2) for three months not giving way to lassitude or sleep, even for the time it takes to snap the fingers; (3) having exerted oneself energetically and taken to walking up and down, not to sit down on the ground for three months except to perform the bodily functions . . .
>
> [4B *PE*; 106–4–2 to 4]

To move on to the content of the *samādhi*, an important phrase in two of the passages quoted above (3A, 3B) is 'in accordance with what he has heard' (Skt. *yathāśrutam*), which one might better translate 'in accordance with what he has learnt'. This clearly refers to oral or written tradition concerning the Buddha or Buddhas chosen as objects of the *samādhi*, and the use of this material as the basis for the visualisation. Sūtras like the *Sukhāvatīvyūha* serve this function to a degree, and later works like the *Kuan wu-liang-shou-fo-ching* are even more

explicit in the instructions they give for the construction of mental images. While the *Pratyutpanna-sūtra* implies that special works of this type were already in existence, it itself gives only visualisation-guide-lines of a general nature, much as we have already seen in the *Āgama* passage on *buddhānusmṛti*, only recast in Mahāyāna terms. For example, in 3F a description of *buddhānusmṛti* is put into the mouth of Amitāyus himself:

> *. . . saṅs rgyas rjes su dran pa de gaṅ źe na / 'di lta ste / gaṅ de bźin gśegs pa yid la byed pa ste / 'di ltar de ni de bźin gśegs pa dgra bcom pa yaṅ dag par rdzogs pa'isaṅs rgyas / rig pa daṅ źabs su ldan pa / bde bar gśegs pa / 'jig rten mkhyen pa / skyes bu 'dul ba'i kha lo sgyur ba / bla na med pa / lha daṅ mi rnams kyi ston pa / saṅs rgyas bcom ldan 'das / skyes bu chen po'i mtshan sum cu rtsa gñis daṅ gser gyi mdog lta bu'i sku daṅ ldan pa / gser gyi gzugs 'tsher źiṅ gsal la legs par gnas pa daṅ 'dra ba / rin po che'i mchod sdoṅ ltar śiṅ tu brgyan pa / ñan thos kyi dge 'dun gyi naṅ na chos kyaṅ ston te . . . gaṅ de ltar de bźin gśegs pa mi dmigs par yid la byed pas stoṅ pa ñid kyi tiṅ ṅe 'dzin thob pa de ni saṅs rgyas rjes su dran pa źes bya ste /*
>
> . . . what is the calling to mind of the Buddha [*buddhānusmṛti*]? Namely, he who concentrates on the Tathāgata thus: 'He, the Tathāgata, Arhat, Samyaksaṃbuddha, endowed with knowledge and conduct, the Sugata, Knower of the World, Tamer of men to be tamed, the Supreme One, Teacher of Gods and Men, the Buddha, the Lord; endowed with the Thirty-two Marks of the Great Man and a body resembling the colour of gold; like a bright, shining, and well-established golden image; well-adorned like a pillar of gems; expounding the Dharma amidst an assembly of disciples . . .'; he who obtains the *samādhi* of Emptiness by thus concentrating on the Tathāgata without apprehending him, he is known as one who calls to mind the Buddha.
>
> [3F; *PE* 105–3–7 to 4–4]

Further directions are given in Chapter Eight:

> *bzaṅ skyoṅ / de la byaṅ chub sems dpa' sems dpa' chen po'i tiṅ ṅe 'dzin 'di ji ltar bsgom par bya źe na / bzaṅ skyoṅ / 'di lta ste dper na ṅa da ltar khyod kyi mdun na 'dug ciṅ chos ston pa de bźin du / byaṅ chub sems dpas de bźin gśegs pa dgra bcom pa yaṅ dag par rdzogs pa'i saṅs rgyas de dag saṅs rgyas kyi gdan la bźugs śiṅ chos ston par yaṅ yid la bya'o // des rnam pa thams cad kyi mchog daṅ ldan pa / gzugs bzaṅ ba / mdzes pa / blta na sdug pa / sku yoṅs su grub pa daṅ ldan par de bźin gśegs pa rnams yid la bya'o // de bźin gśegs pa dgra bcom pa yaṅ dag par rdzogs pa'i saṅs rgyas kyi skyes bu chen po'i mtshan re re yaṅ bsod nams brgyas bskyed par blta'o // mtshan ma rnams kyaṅ gzuṅ bar bya'o //*

Bhadrapāla, how then is this *samādhi* of bodhisattvas, mahāsattvas to be developed? Bhadrapāla, just as, for example, I at present am sitting before you and teaching the Dharma, in the same way, Bhadrapāla, the bodhisattva should also fix his mind on those Tathāgatas, Arhats, Samyaksaṃbuddhas as sitting on the Buddha-throne and teaching the Dharma. He should fix his mind on the Tathāgatas as being endowed with the best of all modes [*sarvākāravaropeta*], fair in appearance, beautiful, pleasing to look upon, and endowed with perfect development of body. He should also see that each of the Marks of the Great Man of the Tathāgatas, Arhats, Samyaksambuddhas has been produced by a hundred merits; and he should fix upon the marks.

[8A; *PE* 110–2–1 to 4]

In conclusion, we see that written or orally transmitted descriptive works expanding the traditional guidelines for *buddhānusmṛti* provided the raw material for the visual content of the *pratyutpanna-samādhi*. The visual experience, however, is only a starting-point.

## 6. The nature of the *Pratyutpanna-samādhi*

We have seen in one passage quoted above (3C) that the author of the *Pratyutpanna-sūtra* studiously rejects any interpretation of the *pratyutpanna-samādhi* in terms of magical or extraordinary powers (*abhijñā*), since this would presuppose an actual, physical experience, and hence the adoption of a basically materialist position (see also 1Y;*PE* 103–3–8 to 4–4). How then is the experience to be explained? Chapter Three addresses itself to this question by means of various analogies, equating the results of the *samādhi* most often with the seeming reality of dreams. Then comes the classic statement of the problem:

*. . . byaṅ chub sems dpa' de yaṅ tiṅ ṅe 'dzin 'di śin tu bsgoms pas tshegs chuṅ ṅus de bźin gśegs pa de rnams byaṅ chub sems dpa' des mthoṅ ṅo // mthoṅ nas kyaṅ źu ba źu źiṅ źus pa luṅ bstan pas yi raṅs par 'gyur ro // de 'di sñam du // de bźin gśegs pa 'di ga źig nas byon tam // bdag ga źig tu son tam // sñam pa las des de bźin gśegs pa de gaṅ nas kyah ma byon par rab tu śes so // bdag gi lus kyaṅ gaṅ du yaṅ ma soṅ bar rab tu 'du śes nas // de 'di sñam du // khams gsum pa 'di dag ni sems tsam mo // de ci'i phyir źe na // 'di Itar bdag ji Ita ji ltar rnam par rtog pa de lta de Itar snaṅ duno //*

. . . when the bodhisattva has developed this *samādhi* properly, that bodhisattva sees those Tathāgatas with little difficulty. Having seen them he asks them questions, and is gladdened by the elucidation of those questions. Having thought: 'Did these Tathāgatas come from

> somewhere? Did I go any where?' he understands that those Tathāgatas did not come from anywhere. Having comprehended that his own body did not go anywhere either, he thinks: 'These Triple Worlds are nothing but thought.[11] That is because however I discriminate things [Skt. *vikalpayati*, mentally construct], so they appear.'
>
> [3L;*PE* 106–2–7 to 3–2].

The formulation of the question here is similar to that found in the story of Sadāprarudita in the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* (hereafter: *Aṣṭa*).[12] The Sadāprarudita story is, on the basis of various indications, thought to be a later addition to an earlier and shorter version of the *Aṣṭa*, even though it appears in the oldest surviving Chinese version of that sūtra, and is thus very old itself.[13] In the version preserved in the Sanskrit text, the bodhisattva Sadāprarudita, at one stage in the course of his search for the Prajñāpāramitā, enters many *samādhis*, of which the last two are *tathāgata-darśana-samādhi* (*Samādhi* of the Vision of the Tathāgatas) and *sarva-tathāgata-darśī-samādhi* (*Samādhi* of the Beholder of All Tathāgatas); the text continues:

> *sa eṣu samādhiṣu sthitaḥ san daśadiśi loke buddhān bhagavataḥ paśyati sma aprameyān asamkhyeyān imām eva prajñāpāramitāṃ prakāśayato bodhisattvebhyo mahāsattvebhyaḥ // te ca tathāgatāḥ sādhukāraṃ dadati* [Read: *dadanti*] *sma svāsanaṃ* [Read: *āśvāsanaṃ*?] *cāsya kurvanti sma . . . atha khalu te tathāgatāḥ Sadāpraruditaṃ bodhisattvaṃ mahāṣattvaṃ samāśvāsya antarhitā abhuvan / sa ca kulaputras tebhyaḥ samādhibhyo vyudasthāt / vyutthitasya cāsya etad abhūt kutas te tathāgatāḥ kva vā te tathāgatā iti /*
>
> Established in these *samādhis* he saw innumerable, incalculable Buddhas and Lords in the world, in the ten directions, expounding this very Perfection of Wisdom to bodhisattvas, mahāsattvas. And those Tathāgatas applauded him and comforted [?] him . . . Then, when those Tathāgatas had consoled the bodhisattva, mahāsattva Sadāprarudita, they disappeared. That son of good family emerged from those *samādhis*, and when he had emerged he thought: 'Where did those Tathāgatas come from, and where have they gone?'
>
> [*Aṣṭa*, pp. 243–244]

This is the question with which Sadāprarudita finally comes to his appointed master, the bodhisattva Dharmodgata:

> *so 'haṃ tvāṃ kulaputra pṛcchāmi kutas te tathāgatā āgatāḥ kutra te tathāgatā gatā iti / deśaya me kulaputra teṣāṃ tathāgatānām āgamanaṃ gamanaṃ ca / yathā vayaṃ teṣāṃ tathāgatānām āgamanam gamanaṃ ca jānīma avirahitāś ca bhavema tathāgatadarśaneneti //*

I ask you, son of good family: 'Where did those Tathāgatas come from, and where have those Tathāgatas gone?' Son of good family, explain to me the coming and going of those Tathāgatas, so that we may know the coming and going of those Tathāgatas, and become those who are not deprived of the vision of the Tathāgatas.

[*Aṣṭa*, p. 252]

Dharmodgata's response to this query, beginning with the words: *na khalu . . . tathāgatāḥ kutaścid āgacchanti vā gacchanti vā* ('The Tathāgatas indeed do not come from anywhere, nor do they go anywhere.'), constitutes his first discourse on the Dharma, and strikes many echoes in the *Pratyutpanna-sūtra* with its description of the appearance of the Tathāgatas as being equivalent to a dream (see *Aṣṭa*, pp. 253 ff.). However, the fact that in this context *samādhi* provides the framework within which one sees the Buddhas becomes even more interesting when we consider the earliest Chinese translations of the *Aṣṭa*, for they preserve quite a different version of the story of Sadāprarudita.[14] Lokakṣema's translation of the *Aṣṭa*, the *Tao-hsing pan-jo ching* (*T.* 224; Vol. 8, p. 472a18 ff.), omits the long list of *samādhis* found in the Sanskrit text and replaces them with a single *samādhi*, the *Chien shih-fang chu-fo san-mei*, viz. the '*Samādhi* of the Vision of the Buddhas of the Ten Directions.' In a similar fashion, the second Chinese translation of the *Aṣṭa*, the *Ta-ming-tu ching* (*T.* 225), attributed to Chih Ch'ien,[15] has *Chien shih-fang fo ting*, the '*Samādhi* of the Vision of the Buddhas of the Ten Directions' (*T.* Vol. 8, p. 504c6). These titles occur several times in both translations so there can be no doubt that a specific *samādhi* is being referred to in this early version of the *Aṣṭa*. Now, we have no way of knowing whether or not that *samādhi* can be equated with the *pratyutpanna-samādhi*; what is important for our purposes is that, given the production at some time of the *Pratyutpanna-sūtra*, we are liable to regard the experience of the vision of the Buddhas of the ten directions less as a mere dramatic property in the development of the Sadāprarudita story and more as a specific experience on the path to the Perfection of Wisdom and awakening, an experience which the author of that tale saw as being worthy of elucidation in terms of the doctrine of Śūnyatā, hence its being made the subject of Dharmodgata's sermon.

We have already cited the passage (3F) in which Amitāyus defines *Buddhānusmṛti*, but we omitted an important part from it. After describing the various items to be brought to mind, Amitāyus continues:

[*gaṅ de bźin gśegs pa yid la byed pa ste*] . . . *de de bźin gśegs pa rlom sems su mi byed / mi dmigs / mṅon par mi chags / yaṅ dag par mi śes / mi rtog / rnam par mi rtog / yaṅ dag par rjes su mi mthoṅ ste / gaṅ de ltar de bźin gśegs pa mi dmigs par yid la byed pas stoṅ pa ñid kyi tiṅ ṅe 'dzin thob pa de ni saṅs rgyas rjes su dran pa źes bya ste /*

[Whoever concentrates on the Tathāgata] . . . and yet does not think erroneously about [*manyate*], does not apprehend [*upalabhate*], does

> not fixate on [*abhiniviśate*], does not cognise [*saṃjānāti*], does not imagine [*kalpati*], does not discriminate [*vikalpayati*], and does not review [*samanupaśyati*] the Tathāgata – he who obtains the *samādhi* of Emptiness by thus concentrating on the Tathāgata without apprehending him, he is known as one who calls to mind the Buddha.
>
> [3F; *PE* 105–4–2 to 4]

The Sanskrit verbs[16] in this passage, tuned to a fine range of philosophical subleties in the face of which English is plainly inadequate, convey unmistakably the idea that the vision of the Tathāgata is not to be thought of as the experience of a real entity. The *Pratyutpanna-sūtra* repeatedly inveighs against this false notion of a substance, or of an objectively existing entity (*bhāvasaṃjñā*), that is, something which could 'come' or 'go', counselling instead the cultivation of the notion of empty space (*ākāśa-saṃjñā*) with regard to the Tathāgatas seen in *samādhi*.[17] The most common term in this respect is the Tibetan *dmigs pa*, 'to fancy', 'to imagine', for Sanskrit *upalabhate* and related nominal forms like *upalambha, upalabdhi*. Referring primarily to the act of grasping or obtaining, the significance of *upalambha* as a mental function is only imperfectly rendered by 'apprehension'. Conze (1967) also gives 'apprehension of a basis', 'taking as a basis' (pp. 131–132, 35–36). This difficult term, common in the Prajñāpāramitā literature, refers then to that mode of cognition which views its objects as existing in themselves; to have such notions about those objects is tantamount to being attached to them. The *Pratyutpanna-sūtra* emphasises again and again that such 'apprehensions' of the Tathāgatas seen in *samādhi* constitute a grave error, and in making this point it produces several interesting passages concerning the nature of all dharmas; some of the Tibetan defies attempts to understand it, but the general drift is quite clear.

> *bzaṅ skyoṅ / de bźin gśegs pa dgra bcom pa yaṅ dag par rdzogs pa'i saṅs rgyas rnams daṅ / byaṅ chub sems dpa' sems dpa' chen po phyir mi ldog pa rnams daṅ / ñan thos lus mṅon sum du byed pa rnams ma gtogs par tiṅ ṅe 'dzin 'di la su źig mṅon par dad par 'gyur // bzaṅ skyoṅ / de ci'i phyir że na / da ltar gyi saṅs rgyas mṅon sum du bźugs pa'i byaṅ chub sems dpa'i tiṅ ṅe 'dzin 'di la byis pa so so'i skye bo thams cad kyis ni 'khrul to // bzaṅ skyoṅ / de ci'i phyir że na / chos de dag ñid yid la bya / chos de dag ñid blta bar bya / saṅs rgyas bcom ldan 'das dag kyaṅ yid la bya / de bźin gśegs pa rnams kyaṅ blta bar bya / chos kyaṅ mñan par bya ste / mṅon par źen par ni mi bya'o //*
>
> *bzaṅ skyoṅ / de ci'i phyir że na / chos 'di dag thams cad ni raṅ bźin gyis stoṅ pa // raṅ bźin gyis yoṅs su dag pa ste / thog ma ñid nas ñe bar źi ba'o // bzaṅ skyoṅ // chos 'di dag thams cad ni dmigs pa'i dbaṅ du gyur pas dmigs su med pa'o // chos 'di dag thams cad ni yid la bya ba de ñid kyis dben pa'o // chos 'di dag thams cad ni raṅ bźin gyis dmigs su med pas gzuṅ du med pa'o // chos 'di dag thams cad ni nam mkha'*

*daṅ 'dra bas mi chags pa'o // chos 'di dag thams cad ni bdag daṅ sems can gyi 'du śes daṅ bral ba'i phyir śin tu rnam par dag pa'o // chos 'di dag thams cad ni rgyu'i dbaṅ las gyur pas ñon moṅs pa med pa'o // chos 'di dag thams cad ni srog daṅ gaṅ zag mi dmigs pa'i phyir bgraṅ du med pa'o // chos 'di dag thams cad ni raṅ bźin gyis 'od gsal bas mya ṅan las 'das pa daṅ mñam pa'o // chos 'di dag thams cad ni dṅos po mi dmigs pa'i phyir ñe bar gyur pa'o //*

Bhadrapāla, who will have faith in this *samādhi* apart from Tathāgatas, Arhats, Samyaksaṃbuddhas, irreversible [*avaivartika*] bodhisattvas, mahāsattvas, and those who manifest the bodies of Śrāvakas? That is because, Bhadrapāla, all foolish common people [*pṛthagjana*] are mistaken with regard to this *Pratyutpanna-buddha-saṃmukhāvasthita-bodhisattva-samādhi*. That is because, Bhadrapāla, although one should concentrate on those very dharmas and see those very dharmas, and should also concentrate on the Buddhas, Lords and see the Tathāgatas, and hear the Dharma as well, one should not become attached.

That is because, Bhadrapāla, all these dharmas are empty by nature [*svabhāvena śūnya*], pure [*pariśuddha*] by nature, and pacified from the very beginning [*ādyupaśānta*]. Bhadrapāla, all these dharmas cannot be apprehended [*anupalambha*] because they are subject to [?] apprehension [*upalambha*]. All these dharmas are isolated [*vivikta*] by the very act of concentration [*manasikāra*]. All these dharmas are ungraspable [*agrāhya*] because by nature they cannot be apprehended. All these dharmas are without attachment [*asaṅga*] because they resemble space. All these dharmas are utterly pure [*suviśuddha*] because they are devoid of notions [*saṃjñā*] of 'self' [*ātman*] and 'being' [*sattva*]. All of these dharmas are undefiled [*niḥkleśa*] because they are not subject [?] to causes [*hetu*]. All these dharmas are incalculable [*asaṃkhyeya*] because there is no apprehension of 'life'. [*jīvita*] or 'person' [*pudgala*]. All these dharmas are equivalent to Nirvāṇa because they are by nature luminous. All these dharmas are near because there is no apprehension of substance [*bhāva*].

[15K,L; *PE* 118–2–4 to 3–3]

*. . . byaṅ chub sems dpa' sems dpa' chen po lus la lus kyi rjes su lta źiṅ gnas te / lus daṅ ldan pa'i rnam par rtog pa ni rnam par mi rtog / tshor ba daṅ / sems daṅ / chos la chos kyi rjes su lta źiṅ gnas te / chos daṅ ldan pa'irnam par rtog pa ni rnam par mi rtog na / chos thams cad mi dmigs par 'gyur ro // chos thams cad mi dmigs pa de mi rtog / rnam par mi rtog go // bzaṅ skyoṅ / gaṅ mi rtog / rnam par mi rtog pa de ni chos gaṅ yaṅ mi mthoṅ ṅo // bzaṅ skyoṅ / gaṅ la chos, gaṅ yaṅ mi mthoṅ ba de ni sgrib pa med pa'i ye śes śes bya'o // bzaṅ skyoṅ / gaṅ sgrib pa med pa'i ye śes de ni / bzaṅ skyoṅ / tiṅ ṅe 'dzin ces bya'o //*

*bzaṅ skyoṅ / byaṅ chub sems dpa' gaṅ tiṅ ṅe 'dzin 'di daṅ ldan pa de ni saṅs rgyas tshad med graṅs med pa rnams mthoṅ ṅo // dam pa'i chos kyaṅ thos so //*

... if with regard to the body a bodhisattva mahāsattva abides in the contemplation of the body, yet does not entertain the false discrimination [*vikalpaṃ vikalpayati*] connected with the body; if, with regard to sensation [*vedanā*], thought [*citta*], and dharmas, he abides in the contemplation of dharmas, yet does not entertain the false discrimination connected with dharmas, then he does not apprehend all dharmas. He who does not apprehend all dharmas does not imagine [*kalpayati*] or falsely discriminate [*vikalpayati*] anything. Bhadrapāla, he who does not imagine or falsely discriminate anything does not see any dharmas. Bhadrapāla, that not seeing any dharmas is known as unobstructed knowledge. Bhadrapāla, that unobstructed knowledge is known as *samādhi*.

Bhadrapāla, the bodhisattva who possesses this *samādhi* sees innumerable, incalculable Buddhas, and he hears the True Dharma.

[18B; *PE* 121–3–1 to 4]

*... gal te byaṅ chub sems dpa' chos kyi 'du śes 'jug na / de ñid de'i dmigs par lta bar 'gyur ro // de ñid yod par lta ba daṅ / bdag tu lta ba daṅ / sems can du lta ba daṅ / srog tu lta ba daṅ / gaṅ zag tu lta bar 'gyur ro // de ñid phuṅ por lta ba daṅ / khams su lta ba daṅ / skye mched du lta ba daṅ / mtshan mar lta ba daṅ / dṅos por lta ba daṅ / rgyur lta ba daṅ / rkyen du lta ba daṅ / dmigs pa 'dzin par 'gyur ro //*

... if the bodhisattva adopts the notion of 'dharma', that leads to the (false) view of the apprehension of a basis [*upalambha-dṛṣṭi*] for him. That leads to the view of 'existence', the view of 'self', the view of 'being', the view of 'life', and the view of 'person'. That leads to the view of aggregates [*skandha*], the view of elements [*dhātu*], the view of sense-fields [*āyatana*], the view of signs [*nimitta*], the view of substance [*bhāva*], the view of causes [*hetu*], the view of conditions [*pratyaya*], and to holding to the apprehension of a basis.

[18D; *PE* 121–3–8 to 4–2]

*... chos thams cad ni raṅ bźin gyis stoṅ pa daṅ / chos thams cad ni mtshan ma med pa / mi gzuṅ ba / gzuṅ ba med par byaṅ chub sems dpas mthoṅ ste / de dag chos thams cad mi dmigs so // rlom sems su mi byed do // mi mthoṅ ṅo //*

... bodhisattvas see all dharmas as empty by nature, as signless [*animitta*] by nature, as ungrasped and ungraspable, so they do not apprehend, think falsely of [*manyate*], or see all dharmas.

[18E; *PE* 121–4–2 to 3]

*bzaṅ skyoṅ / 'di lta ste dper na nam mkha 'gzugs med pa / bstan du med pa / gnas pa med pa / śin tu mam par dag pa / ñon moṅs pa med pa de bźin du byaṅ chub sems depas chos thams cad la blta ste / 'dus byas daṅ 'dus ma byas kyi chos rnams la de'i mig thogs pa med par 'gyur ro //*

*byaṅ chub sems dpa' mig thogs pa med pa de la chos mams mṅon sum du 'gyur te / de yid la byas na / de bźin gśegs pa dgra bcom pa yaṅ dag par rdzogs pa'i saṅs rgyas mthoṅ ṅo //*

Bhadrapāla, just as, for example, space is formless, incommunicable, unlocalised [*aniketa*], utterly pure, and undefiled, so the bodhisattva regards all dharmas, and with regard to dharmas conditioned and unconditioned [*saṃskṛtāsaṃskṛtadharma*] his eye becomes unobstructed.

To the unobstructed eye of the bodhisattva dharmas are manifested, and if he concentrates, he sees . . . the Tathāgatas, Arhats, Samyaksaṃbuddhas.

[18F; *PE* 121-4-7 to 5-5]

The resemblance in tone and content of these passages to much of the Prajñāpāramitā literature should by now be obvious, and we must regard as adequately demonstrated the thesis that the *Pratyutpanna-sūtra* embodies, inter alia, an interpretation of the *buddhānusmṛti* experience which has certain affinities with the Prajñāpāramitā.

Furthermore, it is clear that this interpretation involves a criticism, sometimes stated explicitly but more frequently implied, of other practitioners of *buddhānusmṛti* who, in view of the author of the *Pratyutpanna-sūtra*, were performing it incorrectly in terms of both attitude and motive. This criticism is directed not only at adherents of the Śrāvakayāna and the Pratyekabuddhayana, the classic objects of disparagement and admonition in Mahāyāna sūtras: it is aimed at followers of the Mahāyāna as well.

We have already noted that the repeated references to Amitāyus in the *Pratyutpanna-sūtra* imply the existence of a well-developed cult of that Buddha. It can be maintained, I believe, that some of the followers of that cult could have been the 'bodhisattva-*bhikṣus*' singled out by our author for gentle reproof. It is not beyond the bounds of possibility that he himself was both a proponent of Śūnyatā and at the same time a devotee of Amitābha – there is no reason why this double affiliation should be thought of as contradictory, nor would it prevent him taking to task those of his fellow Mahāyānists who were, in his opinion, falling short of the ultimate truth in their veneration of Amitābha.

The targets of his criticism, errors of attitude (the apprehension of a basis, a materialist view of the *buddhānusmṛti* experience and a refusal to apply the doctrine of Śūnyatā to it) and errors of intent (desire for material gain and fortunate rebirth), are so clearly mirrored in the *Sukhāvatīvyūha* that we would be hard put to it to deny some sort of connection between that work and the *Pratyutpanna-sūtra*. The *Sukhāvatīvyūha*[18] pays not the slightest attention to the doctrines of

the Prajñāpāramitā: the very word *śūnyatā* occurs only twice, and then only in stereotyped contexts (pp. 24, 36). Further, the encounter with Amitābha is depicted as an actual event, taking place (necessarily) at the hour of death and followed by rebirth in Sukhāvatī; at one point, in fact, this encounter is contrasted with the appearance of an apparitional or phantom Buddha (*buddha-nirmita*; see pp. 42–43). Amitābha's appearance to the dying man is contingent upon the faithful performance of *anusmṛti*, but it is not produced by that act, i.e., the performance of *anusmṛti* is merely a prerequisite, not the cause, of that manifestation. All this is at odds with the *Pratyutpanna-sūtra*, in which encounters with Buddhas of the present are products of mind, and may thus occur at any time. There is no need to possess the divine eye, the divine ear, or magical powers, since all that is necessary to see the Buddhas of the present is the 'mind's eye' (cf. *Sukh*. pp. 11–12, vows 5, 7 and 8).

In addition, although the *Sukh*, makes frequent mention of the ultimate goal of supreme and perfect awakening, the immediate objective it holds out to the faithful is undoubtedly rebirth in the paradise of Sukhāvatī and the enjoyment of its sensual and spiritual pleasures, so lavishly described throughout the sūtra. To suggest that this is not so is to do violence to the work as a whole. In the *Pratyutpanna-sūtra* rebirth in Sukhāvatī is mentioned only once, and rather incidentally, in that passage (3E, F) in which the bodhisattva sees Amitāyus and asks him how one is reborn in his world. Amitāyus replies that this can be achieved through the practice of *buddhānusmṛti*; his subsequent description of that practice we have quoted above. Elsewhere, however, the desire for fortunate rebirth is criticised as being immoral; the goal of the good bodhisattva is nothing short of Buddhahood and the salvation of his fellow-beings.

From these indications I believe we are justified in concluding that not only do the *Sukhāvatīvyūha* and the *Pratyutpanna-sūtra* represent substantially different approaches to the idea of *buddhānusmṛti* and *buddha-darśana*, but also certain criticisms in the latter presuppose the existence and currency of the former.

## 7. Hearing the dharma

The *Pratyutpanna-sūtra* claims for the *samādhi* it expounds a special function, one that we have not yet touched upon. Doubtless one performs the *samādhi* to see the Buddhas of the present; but why in the first place does one wish to see the Buddhas? There are two reasons. The first is worship, or *pūjā*, regarded as a merit-producing activity; the second reason is that of hearing the Dharma expounded by the Buddhas (see e.g. 3C, quoted above).

*Śruti* ('learning') or *bāhuśrutya* ('great learning') is not regarded as a particularly important quality in Mahāyāna texts, although they often make a point of criticising it when it is unaccompanied by moral integrity.[19] *Śruti* means primarily 'hearing', and originally designated the knowledge acquired through oral

transmission and memorisation within the teacher-pupil relationship. In a Buddhist context it refers particularly to the hearing and memorisation of the Buddha's word in the form of the Dharma (i.e. the Sūtras) and the Vinaya. The *Pratyutpanna-sūtra* is interesting in that it accords *bāhuśrutya* particular importance. In Chapter One, when Bhadrapāla first questions the Buddha about the *samādhi*, he enumerates a long list of desirable qualities that such a *samādhi* might engender; the first of these is *thos pa rgya mtsho 'dra ba daṅ / thos pa bsags pa*, 'having learning similar to the ocean, having an accumulation of learning' [1K; *PE* 102–2–1]. This is echoed in the Buddha's reply: he describes the *pratyutpanna-samādhi* as *maṅ du thos pa sṅon du 'gro ba'i chos rnams yoṅs su rdzogs par 'gyur*, 'leading to the achievement of the qualities [*dharma*], the first of which is great learning [*bāhuśrutya-pūrvaṃgama*]' [2C;*PE* 104–1–2 to 3]. Later the *samādhi* is defined, *inter alia*, as *thos pa'i rigs*, 'the lineage [*gotra? vaṃśa*?] of learning', *thos pa rgya mtsho lta bu*, 'oceanic learning', *thos pa bsags pa*, 'an accumulation of learning', and *thos pa'i gźi*, 'the basis of learning' [15H; *PE* 118–1–3].

Chapter Twenty-three opens with an enumeration of four 'rejoicings' (Tib. *rjes su yi raṅ ba*; Skt. *anumodanā*) of which the bodhisattva should make a formal utterance. They all follow much the same pattern, the second, for example, running as follows:

> *...ji ltar ma byon pa'i de bźin gśegs pa dgra bcom pa yaṅ dag par rdzogs pa'i saṅs rgyas de dag byaṅ chub sems dpa'i spyad pa spyod par 'gyur ba na tiṅ ṅe 'dzin 'di gsan nas luṅ mnos te / bla na med pa yaṅ dag par rdzogs pa'i byaṅ chub kyi ched du maṅ du thos pa thob par bya ba daṅ / maṅ du thos pa yoṅs su rdzogs par bya ba'i phyir rjes su yi raṅ bar 'gyur ba de bźin du bdag kyaṅ rjes su yi raṅ ṅo //*
>
> ...as the Tathāgatas, Arhats, Samyaksaṃbuddhas of the future, when they pursue the bodhisattva-course, shall on hearing and being taught this *samādhi* rejoice at obtaining great learning and at fulfilling great learning for the sake of supreme and perfect awakening, so I too rejoice.
>
> [23B; *PE* 124–5–6 to 8]

The Chinese of *T.*416 reveals a slightly different temporal succession:

> As all future Tathāgatas, Arhats, Samyaksaṃbuddhas, when they pursue the bodhisativa-course, shall through rejoicing obtain this *samādhi*, through this *samādhi* achieve great learning, and through great learning quickly realise *anuttara-samyaksaṃbodhi*, so shall I too today; I shall obtain this *samādhi* through rejoicing, shall seek great learning through reliance on the *samādhi*, and shall, through great learning, quickly realise that supreme *bodhi*.
>
> [*T.* Vol. 13, p. 894b6–11]

In the *Pratyutpanna-sūtra* the bodhisattva becomes *bahuśruta*, 'greatly learned' because he hears the preaching of the Buddhas while under the influence of the *samādhi*. Repeatedly the sūtra enjoins him to accept what he so hears, to retain it and memorise it, and then, after emerging from the *samādhi*, to put it into practice himself as well as expounding it to others. But what in fact is the bodhisattva supposed to hear? Implicitly, sūtraṣ or discourses which accord with the Mahāyāna, which are on one occasion referred to as 'dharmas hitherto unheard' (Tib, *sṅon ma thos pa'i chos rnams*; Skt. *aśrutapūrvadharma*).

The Sanskrit fragment of the *Pratyutpanna-sūtra* fortunately preserves for us the sūtra's clearest utterance on this point:[20]

> *buddhāpi bhagavan ta tasya bodhisatvasyāntamaśaḥ supināntaragatasyāpi mukhadarśanaṃ nāmaparikīrttana ca karonti buddhadharmāṃ cāsya śrāv̄ayanti tasya bodhisatvasya punar aparam gṛhapate tasya bodhisatvasya anuddiṣṭāppratilabdhā dharmaśabdhā* [Thomas: -śabdā] *śrotrāvabhāsam āgacchanti ppratilabhati ca sa bodhisa sya* [Thomas: bodhisatvas tasya] *samādher anubhāvena tāṃ dharmāṃ śṛṇoti.*
>
> The Buddhas, Lords also show their faces and proclaim their names[21] to that bodhisattva even in his dreams, and cause that bodhisattva to hear the Dharmas of the Buddhas. Further, O householder [i.e. Bhadrapāla], undeclared, unobtained words of the Dharma come within the range of hearing of that bodhisattva, and he acquires them; by the power of that *samādhi* that bodhisattva hears those dharmas.

What we have here is in all probability a justification in advance (if not also retrospectively) for the sudden appearance of Mahāyāna sūtras, i.e. 'dharmas hitherto unheard'.[22] However, it is by no means to be regarded as necessarily a cynical attempt to confer a specious authenticity on the literary confections of followers of the Mahāyāna. It involves rather the proposition that meditation is a legitimate means whereby the eternal Buddha-principle may continue to reveal religious truths to those fit to receive them, and thus it throws an interesting light on the composition of Mahāyāna sūtras in general. It is no doubt in this sense, that of a channel of inspiration and revelation, that the author of the *Pratyutpanna-sūtra* advocated the inclusion of the *pratyutpanna-samādhi* amongst the religious practices of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

## 8. Conclusion

The *Pratyutpanna-sūtra* reflects the many-sided nature of the Mahāyāna movement. Although it is regarded as an early sūtra itself, we have seen that the ideas it advances themselves presuppose the prior existence, in some form or another, of the *Sukhāvatīvyūha* and the early Prajñāpāramitā sūtras. In its interpretation of a 'Mahāyāna-ised' form of *buddhānusmṛti* in terms of the doctrine of Śūnyatā it

reveals tensions within the Mahāyāna, and within Buddhism in general, which stem not from differences of practice so much as from differences of attitude and approach. It is well known that there is a core of practices common to all forms of Buddhism; Chinese pilgrims in India frequently noted the peaceful co-existence of Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna monks within the same institutions. What differences there were between these two main divisions of Buddhism must originally have been largely a matter of interpretation and motivation, not of outward form.

It is such differences that the *Pratyutpanna-sūtra* seeks to resolve by propounding the same fundamental attitude – that of Emptiness and non-apprehension – to all phenomena of experience.

## Notes

1 The present paper is based on work towards a critical edition and English translation of the Tibetan text of the *Pratyutpanna-buddha-saṃmukhāvasthita-samādhi-sūtra*. To the best of my knowledge this Mahāyāna sūtra has not yet been translated into, or treated at length in any European language; however, Japanese scholars have devoted some attention to it. Many of the ideas explored here were proposed and discussed by Akanuma Chizen in Chapter Three of his *Bukkyō-kyōten shi ron* (Nagoya, 1939), pp. 388–422, entitled 'Sho-sammai-kyōten, toku ni Hanjuzammaikyō (*Pratyutpanna-samādhi-sūtra*) ni tsuite', an article which remains one of the most perspicacious to be written in Japanese on this particular text. In addressing myself to the same themes as Akanuma, I hope to pay tribute to his scholarship. I should also like here to acknowledge a debt of gratitude to my colleague at A.N.U., Mr. Greg Schopen, for the generosity with which he has shared many stimulating ideas.

2 See e.g. J. W. de Jong, 'Les Sūtrapiṭaka des Sarvāstivādin et des Mūlasarvāstivādin', *Mélanges d'indianisme à la mémoire de Louis Renou* (Paris, 1968), pp. 395–402.

3 See *Hōbōgirin*, s.v. Butsuzō.

4 With the possible exception of references to the Buddha Akṣobhya and his *buddhakṣetra* Abhirati. The relation of Akṣobhya to the Pp. tradition has still to be clarified. See however E. Conze, 'The Composition of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā prajñāpāramitā*', *BSOAS* 14, 1952, pp. 251–262.

5 The *Pratyutpanna-sūtra* (as distinct from the *pratyutpanna-samādhi*) is not quoted or mentioned in any of the major sūtra-digests or śāstras which survive in Sanskrit or Tibetan, e.g. the *Śikṣāsamuccaya*. References to it are found in several Chinese works of doubtful status, ascribed to Indian authors; see e.g. Chapter Twenty of the *Shih-chu p'i-p'o-sha lun* (Skr. *Daśabhūmika-vibhāṣā*), attributed to Nāgārjuna (*Taishō* 1521, Vol. 26, p. 68c.)

6 Edited by F. W. Thomas and published as the 'Bhadrapāla Sūtra' in A. F. Rudolf Hoernle, ed. *Manuscript Remains of Buddhist Literature* (Oxford, 1916), pp. 88–93, see also Addenda, pp. 410–411. This fragment corresponds to the latter part of Chapter Fourteen (14 E-J) in the Tibetan.

7 *Peking Edition of the Tibetan Tripitaka*, Vol. 32, No. 801. All references to the *Pratyutpanna-sūtra* in this paper are to chapter and section of my critical edition of the Tibetan text from the Derge, Narthang, Peking, and Lhasa editions of the Tibetan canon; this edition is due to be published by the Reiyūkai, Tokyo, sometime in 1978. For the convenience of the reader, *Peking Edition* (*PE*) references are given as well.

8 See *Ch'u san-tsang chi chi* II (*Taishō* 2145, Vol. 55), p. 6b.

9 Bhadrapāla, a householder-bodhisattva of Rājagṛha, is the principal interlocutor of the *Pratyutpanna-sūtra*, hence the titles of *Taishō* 419 and 416.

10 Cf. the *Smaller Sukhāvatīvyūha: asti . . . paścime digbhāge* [Read: *digbhāga*] *ito buddhakṣetraṃ* [Read: *buddhakṣetrāt*] *koṭiśatasahasraṃ buddhakṣetrāṇām atikramya sukhāvatī nāma lokadhātuḥ / tatra amitāyur nāma tathāgato 'rhan samyaksaṃbuddha etarhi tiṣṭhati dhriyate yāpayati dharmaṃ ca deśayati /*

11 Or 'mind'. Cf. *Daśabhūmikasūtra* (ed. J. Rahder, 1926), p. 49: *cittamātram idaṃ yad idaṃ traidhātukam*. For a discussion of the historical significance of this statement, see L. Schmithausen, 'Spirituelle Praxis und Philosophische Theorie in Buddhismus', (*Zeit-schrift für Missionswissenschaft und Religionswissenschaft*, Heft 3, 1973, pp. 161–186) pp. 175–176.

12 All references to the *Aṣṭa* will be to P. L. Vaidya's edition, *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* (Buddhist Sanskrit Texts, No. 4), Mithila Institute, Darbhanga, 1960.

13 See Conze (1952), pp. 252–253; Y. Kajiyama, *Hannya-kyō* (Tokyo, 1976), pp. 76–82.

14 Thoroughly treated by L. R. Lancaster in *An Analysis of the Aṣṭasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitāsūtra from the Chinese Translations*, unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1968, pp. 199–309.

15 But see Lancaster, 'The Chinese Translation of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitāsūtra* Attributed to Chih Ch'ien', *Monumenta Serica*, Vol. XXVIII, 1969, pp. 246–257.

16 All such reconstructions from the Tibetan are subject to a lesser or greater degree of uncertainty. I have drawn on Lokesh Chandra's *Tibetan-Sanskrit Dictionary* for equivalents; at the same time Conze's *Materials for a Dictionary of the Prajñāpāramitā Literature* has been an indispensable adjunct.

17 See e.g. 3H; *PE* 105–4–7 to 5–5.

18 All references to the *Larger Sukhāvatīvyūhasūtra* are to Ashikaga's edition, Kyoto, 1965.

19 See the references given in Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Dictionary* s.v. *bahuśruta, bāhuśrutya*. Edgerton's interpretation of this term ('*great (excessive) learning*, disparagingly, as something which does not lead to the true goal') is a little misleading: what is 'disparaged' is the abuse of great learning, or pride in it – not learning itself: see in particular the *Samādhirāja* passage referred to.

20 Cf. Tibetan at 14H, I: *PE* 116–5–8 to 117–1–4. Since I have not yet had the opportunity to study the MS. myself, I have merely presented a typographically simplified version of Thomas's reading of the relevant portion (*Manuscript Remains*, p. 89) with some of his emendations in brackets.

21 The Sanskrit is ambiguous at this point: the Buddhas may indeed announce themselves to the dreaming bodhisattva, but *nāmaparikīrttana* could equally well refer to their declaring his name; or it might simply mean 'praise'.

22 It should be noted at this point that the *Pratyutpanna-sūtra* justifies its own 'sudden appearance' in an entirely different fashion. Chapter Thirteen gives the details: forty years after the Buddha's Parinirvāṇa the sūtra is copied down, placed in a casket, and buried, eventually to be rediscovered in the 'Last Age' and propagated anew by a faithful core of five hundred Buddhists, led by the eight *satpuruṣa* ('good men'), i.e. the householder bodhisattvas of whom Bhadrapāla is the foremost. [See 13B; *PE* 114–4–3 to 5–1; 13K: *PE* 115–4–6 to 5–1]. The discovery of hitherto unknown texts hidden in the ground or inside *stūpas* was of course a common occurrence in Tibet, where such texts were known as *gter mas* ('treasures'); according to Kvaerne, 'The Canon of the Tibetan Bonpos' (*IIJ*, Vol. XVI, No. 1, 1974), pp. 31–38, the first *gter mas* were discovered in the eleventh century. Here, however, we have a reference to the same sort of thing some nine centuries earlier, and in India. Without more data it would be difficult to determine whether this was merely a particularly original and inventive piece of self-authentication on the part of the author of the *Pratyutpanna-sūtra*, or whether it points to a well-known process of text-discovery current at the time.

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37

# WHO GETS TO RIDE IN THE GREAT VEHICLE?

## Self-image and identity among the followers of early Mahāyāna

*Paul Harrison*

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As far as most Buddhist scholars nowadays are concerned, the Mahāyāna was a movement which originated in India some 300 or 400 years after the death of Gautama. Building on various doctrinal developments among certain schools of the so-called Hīnayāna, notably the Mahāsāṅghikas, it promoted a new ideal, that of the *bodhisattva*, or *buddha*-to-be, as opposed to the older *arhat*-ideal. In criticizing the *arhat* the early Mahāyānists are commonly thought to have been striking a blow against the monastic elitism of the Hīnayāna; and their new ideal is supposed to have been developed, in part at least, as a response to the spiritual needs and concerns of the laity.[1] This supposition also finds expression in the claim that, since the Buddha himself had been idealised beyond human reach, the *bodhisattvas* were invented as fitting recipients of the devotion (*bhakti*) of the masses, objects of a cult analogous to the cult of the saints in Christianity.[2] It has also been suggested that the new movement looked more favourably on the religious aspirations and capabilities of women. All these factors are cited as reasons for the success the Mahāyāna enjoyed in establishing itself as a truly popular religion, first in India and subsequently in other countries.

This paper sets out to examine all these assumptions, and to ask the question 'What did it mean to be a follower of the Mahāyāna?' In other words, who or what is a *bodhisattva*? Are *bodhisattvas* really exalted beings, 'divine saviors' or 'saints', or are they ordinary mortals? Can laypeople be *bodhisattvas*? Can women be *bodhisattvas*? And whatever the answers to these questions, what were the consequences of affiliation with the Mahāyāna for people's sense of their own religious identity vis-à-vis other Buddhists, and in relation to followers of other religious paths?

These are, of course, wide-ranging questions, and none of them is amenable

to a simple answer. To reduce the scope of the problem, I propose to confine my remarks to the early Mahāyāna, using as sources the first Chinese translations of Mahāyāna *sūtras*. This comparatively small body of texts—11 in all—was produced in the second half of the 2nd century C.E., or shortly thereafter, by a small group of foreign translators working in the Han capital of Luoyang; most of them are the work of the Indo-Scythian Lokakṣema, active c. 168–189 C.E. Their value lies in the fact that they are the oldest literary evidence for the Mahāyāna, and preserve the earliest phase of that movement frozen, as it were, in an archaic semi-vernacular Chinese; later translations and the Sanskrit texts themselves can and often do contain later accretions, which reduce their value as historical evidence, at least as far as the early period is concerned. The 11 translations themselves have been described at length elsewhere[3]; here they need only be listed with a few essential details:

1. *AsPP* : T.224[4], *Daoxing banruo jing*[a]
= *Aṣṭasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*
Translated by Lokakṣema and Zhu Foshuo, 179 C.E.

There are six other Chinese translations, and one Tibetan translation, the *'Phags-pa shes-rab-kyi pha-rol-tu phyin-pa brgyad-stong-pa*. The Sanskrit text is extant, and has been rendered into English by E. Conze: *The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines and its Verse Summary* (1st ed., Asiatic Society of Calcutta, Calcutta, 1958; reprinted, with corrections, Four Seasons Foundation, Bolinas, Cal., 1975). For full bibliographical details of this key text in its many versions, see E. Conze, *The Prajñāpāramitā Literature* (2nd ed., The Reiyukai, Tokyo, 1978), pp. 46–50.

2. *PraS* : T.418, *Banzhou sanmei jing*[b]
= *Pratyutpanna-buddha-saṃmukhāvasthita-samādhi-sūtra*
Translated by Lokakṣema, Zhu Foshuo *et al.*, 179 C.E., subsequently revised, probably by members of Lokakṣema's school, in 208. Parts of the original version survive.

There are three other Chinese translations (T.416, T.417, T.419) and one Tibetan version, the *'Phags-pa da-ltar-gyi sangs-rgyas mngon-sum-du bzhugs-pa'i ting-nge-'dzin ces-bya-ba theg-pa chen-po'i mdo*, for a critical edition of which see P. Harrison, *The Tibetan Text of the Pratyutpanna-Buddha-Saṃmukhāvasthita-Samādhi-Sūtra (Studia Philologica Buddhica, Monograph Series, I)* (The Reiyukai Library, Tokyo, 1978). The Sanskrit text is lost, except for one small fragment, published as the "Bhadrapāla Sūtra" in A.F. Rudolf Hoernle, ed., *Manuscript Remains of Buddhist Literature* (Oxford, 1916), pp. 88–93, 410–411. An English translation and study of this text is currently being prepared by the author, and a translation of T.418 itself is in press.

3. *3DKP* : T.624, *Dun zhentuoluo suowen rulai sanmei jing*[c]
= *Druma-kinnararāja-paripṛcchā-sūtra*
Translated by Lokakṣema, c. 168–189 C.E.

There is one other Chinese translation (T.625), and one Tibetan version, entitled *'Phags-pa mi-'am-ci'i rgyal-po sdong-pos zhus-pa zhes-bya-ba theg-pa chen-po'i mdo*. The Sanskrit text has been lost.

4. *AjKV* : T.626, *Azheshi wang jing*[d]
= *Ajātaśatru-kaukṛtya-vinodanā-sūtra*
Translated by Lokakṣema, c. 168–189 C.E.

There are three other Chinese translations (T.627, T.628, T.629), and one Tibetan version, the *'Phags-pa ma-skyes-dgra'i 'gyod-pa bsal-ba zhes-bya-ba theg-pa chen-po'i mdo*. The Sanskrit text is not extant.

5. *TSC* : T.280, *Dousha jing*[e]
= part of the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra*
Translated by Lokakṣema, c. 168–189 C.E.

There are two other Chinese versions (T.278, T.279), and one Tibetan version, the *Sangs-rgyas phal-po-che zhes-bya-ba shin-tu rgyas-pa chen-po'i mdo*. The material corresponding to the *TSC* occurs in Chap. XII (*Sangs-rgyas-kyi mtshan shin-tu bstan-pa*) and Chap. XIV (*De-bzhin gshegs-pa'i 'od-zer-las rnam-par sangs-rgyas-pa*). For a partial English translation of this text see Thomas Cleary, transl., *The Flower Ornament Scripture: A Translation of the Avataṃsaka Sūtra*, Vol. I (Shambhala, Boulder, 1984).

6. *LAN* : T.807, *Neizang baibao jing*[f]
= *Lokānuvartana-sūtra*
Translated by Lokakṣema, c. 168–189 C.E.

No other Chinese versions survive, but there is one Tibetan version, the *'Phags-pa 'jig-rten-gyi rjes-su 'thun-par 'jug-pa zhes-bya-ba theg-pa chen-po'i mdo*. The complete Sanskrit text is lost, but a substantial number of verses from it appear it the *Mahāvastu* and the *Prasannapadā*, for which see P. Harrison, "Sanskrit Fragments of a Lokottaravādin Tradition" in L.A. Hercus *et al.*, eds., *Indological and Buddhist Studies: Volume in Honour of Professor J.W. de Jong on his Sixtieth Birthday* (Faculty of Asian Studies, Canberra, 1982), pp. 211–234.

7. *WWP* : T.458, *Wenshushili wen pusa shu jing*[g]
= Sanskrit title unknown
Translated by Lokakṣema, c. 168–189 C.E.

There are no other versions; the Sanskrit text is lost.

8. *KP* : T.350, *Yiri monibao jing*[h]
= *Kāśyapa-parivarta*
Translated by Lokakṣema, c. 168–189 C.E.

For a German rendering of Lokakṣema's version, see F. Weller, "Kāśyapaparivarta nach der Han-Fassung verdeutscht", *Buddhist Yearly* 1968/69 (Halle, 1970), pp. 57–221.

There are four other Chinese versions: T.351 (F. Weller, "Kāśyapaparivarta nach der Djin-Fassung verdeutscht", *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Orientforschung*, XII (1966), pp. 379–462), T.310, No. 43 (F. Weller, "Kāśyapaparivarta nach der Tjin-Übersetzung verdeutscht", *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Karl-Marx-Universität Leipzig*, XIII (1964), Heft 4, pp. 771–804), T.659 (Chap. VII), and T.352 (F. Weller, "Die Sung-Fassung des Kāśyapaparivarta", *Monumenta Serica*, XXV (1966), pp. 207–361).

The Tibetan version, the *'Od-srung-gi le'u*, appears with four Chinese versions in the well-known edition of the Sanskrit text by A. von Stäel-Holstein, *The Kāçyapaparivarta, A Mahāyānasūtra of the Ratnakūṭa Class* (Shanghai, 1926; reprinted, Meicho-Fukyū-Kai, Tokyo, 1977); see also J.W. de Jong, "Sanskrit Fragments of the Kāśyapaparivarta" in *Beiträge zur Indienforschung Ernst Waldschmidt zum 80. Geburtstag gewidmet* (Museum für Indische Kunst, Berlin, 1977), pp. 247–255.

There are a number of modern-language translations of this important text: F. Weller, *Zum Kāśyapaparivarta*, Heft 2, Verdeutschung des sanskrit-tibetischen Textes (*Abhandlungen der sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig, Philologisch-historische Klasse*, Band 57, Heft 3) (Berlin, 1965); Bhikkhu Pasadika, "The Dharma-Discourse of the Great Collection of Jewels, The Kāśyapa Section", published serially in *Linh Son publication d'études bouddhologiques*, I-IX (1977–79); Garma C.C. Chang, ed., *A Treasury of Mahāyāna Sūtras: Selections from the Mahāratnakūṭa Sūtra* (Pennsylvania State University Press, University Park, Penn., 1983), pp. 387–414; Nagao Gadjin and Sakurabe Hajime, "Kashō-hon", in *Daijō butten*, Vol. IX (Chūōkōronsha, Tokyo, 1974), pp. 5–124.

9. *AkTV* : T.313, *Achufo guo jing*[i]
= *Akṣobhya-tathāgatasya-vyūha-sūtra*
Attributed to Lokakṣema, but probably the work of one of his contemporaries or of later members of his school.

Although the Sanskrit text has been lost, we still possess one other Chinese version (T.310, No. 6) and one Tibetan version, the *'Phags-pa de-bzhin-gshegs-pa mi-'khrugs-pa'i bkod-pa zhes-bya-ba theg-pa chen-po'i mdo*. For full bibliographical details, see *Buddhist Text Information*, 40–41 (June & Sept. 1984). A partial French translation has been published by J. Dantinne: *La Splendeur de*

*l'Inébranlable (Akṣobhyavyūha)*, Tome I (Université Catholique de Louvain, Institut Orientaliste, Louvain-la-Neuve, 1983), while an English translation (with omissions) based on the Chinese text (T.310,6) may be found in Garma C.C. Chang, ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 315–338.

10. *CGD* : T.630, *Chengju guangming dingyi jing*[j]
= Sanskrit title unknown.
Attributed to Zhi Yao, active late 2nd century.

There are no other versions; the Sanskrit text is lost.

11. *UP* : T.322, *Fa jing jing*[k]
= *Ugra (datta)-paripṛcchā-sūtra*
Translated by An Xuan and Yan Fotiao, active c. 180 C.E.

There are two other Chinese versions (T.310, No. 19, and T.323) and one Tibetan version, the *'Phags-pa drag-shul-can-gyis zhus-pa zhes-bya-ba theg-pa chen-po'i mdo*, which has been translated into Japanese by Sakurabe Hajime in *Daijō butten*, Vol. IX (Chūōkōronsha, Tokyo, 1974), pp. 231–335.

It should be noted here that the use of these texts for historical research into Indian Buddhism presents certain problems, although, due to considerations of space, a full methodological discussion will have to be reserved for a later date. As translations they are reasonably reliable, but by no means as reliable as their Tibetan counterparts, against which they need to be checked. Although they were all produced at roughly the same time and roughly the same place, the original *sūtras* may well have been written at different times, in different places, and by different hands. Furthermore, those hands were almost certainly those of literate males, probably monks, which means that the *sūtras* must represent a limited point of view, albeit an influential one. These problems are all serious, to be sure, but it can nevertheless be argued that if these texts are used with the appropriate caution, their evidential value is substantial, especially in view of the fact that, apart from a small number of inscriptions,[5] we have little else to assist our enquiries. They certainly contain sufficient data to enable us to arrive at unequivocal answers to at least some of our questions.

To begin with, how is the Mahāyāna referred to in these translations? The term *Mahāyāna* itself is found, either transliterated (*moheyan*[l]) or translated (*dadao*[m], "the Great Way"), but it is surprisingly rare (about 20 occurrences in all). Not much more frequent is the use of the term "Bodhisattva Way" (*oysadao*[n]), which may or may not render *bodhisattvayāna* or *bodhisattvamārga* in the original Sanskrit (or Indic) text. If we examine those translations for which the Sanskrit is still extant, we find, e.g., that in Lokakṣema's version of the *KP* *pusadao* occurs several times, twice translating *mahāyāna* (*KP* 3, 118), once *bodhisattva-mārga* (*KP* 12), and once in a periphrastic rendering of *udārādhimukta* as "those who delight in the Bodhisattva Way" (*KP* 11). In the *AsPP* we

find it used for *duṣkara-cārikā* (428b18) and *bodhisattva-cārikā* (428b20), but most often, in the expression *xing pusadao zhe*[o], it renders *bodhisattvayānikāḥ pudgalāḥ*, "people who are adherents of the Bodhisattvayāna" (e.g. 447b3,24–25,465c9–10). When the term is found in other translations it usually occurs in the phrase *xing* (or *qiu*) *pusadao zhe*[p], "those who practise (or seek) the Bodhisattva Way", pointing once again to an original *bodhisattvayānika*. The rarity of the terms *mahāyāna* and *bodhisattvayāna* already invites the conclusion that at this stage there was no rigid division of the Buddhist Sangha into two hostile camps to the extent that the modern understanding of the terms 'Mahāyāna' and 'Hīnayāna' implies. There was indeed a new spirit abroad: the authors of our texts are devoted to its promulgation, but there is little evidence of any urge on their part to enshrine their different point of view in hard and fast sectarian categories, something to which we shall return later. Rather than speak of the Mahāyāna, they chose to address themselves to those substantive issues which we have come to associate with that movement, i.e. the doctrines of emptiness (*śūnyatā*), the perfection of wisdom (*prajñāpāramitā*) and the five other perfections, skill-in-means (*upāyakauśalya*) and, above all, the career of the *bodhisattva*, the aspirant to awakening or buddhahood. It is especially in their treatment of the *bodhisattva* that we can see how these early Mahāyāna writers conceived of their identity and their place within the Buddhist world.

In these archaic Chinese texts the word *bodhisattva* is almost always transliterated as *pusa*[q], although the *UP* uses the translation *kaishi*[r] ("the revealer") while the *CGD* has settled on the rendering *mingshi*[s] ("the enlightened one"). In most of our *sūtras* the word occurs prolifically, and is generally neutral with regard to lay/monastic status and gender. (As far as the latter is concerned, this is not surprising, since Classical Chinese lacks any kind of inflectional system for conveying distinctions of gender, number and case; but in the original Sanskrit *sūtras* the word *bodhisattva* would always have been masculine.) Frequently, however, different types of *bodhisattvas are* distinguished, the most common distinction being a twofold one between 'renunciant' or 'monastic' *bodhisattvas*, those who have left the household life to devote themselves full-time to spiritual matters, and 'householder' or 'lay' *bodhisattvas*, who practise their religion as full members of society. These two categories are sometimes further subdivided according to gender to arrive at the "four classes of disciples", i.e. *bodhisattvas* who are monks, nuns, laymen and laywomen. I propose to look at the basic twofold lay/monastic division first, and then examine the male/female one to see what distinction, if any, is made on the basis of gender. As simple as this approach sounds, it does present difficulties, since the male is taken as paradigmatic, and is often clearly intended even when the texts are speaking generally in terms which could apply equally well to men and women. Before we look at these divisions, however, let us first see what terms are used to refer to the "four classes of disciples" collectively and individually.

The expression "four classes of disciples" itself (Chinese: *sibei dizi*[t] or *sibu dizi*[u]) occurs occasionally (e.g. *AsPP* 467b29,469a18–19; *AkTV* 757b15–16;

*CGD* 456a2; *PraS* 915a10), as does the full enumeration of these classes, i.e. *biqiu biqiuni youposai youpoyi*[v] (= *bhikṣus*, *bhikṣuṇīs*, *upāsakas* and *upāsikās*, or monks, nuns, laymen and laywomen; e.g. *PraS* 918a8–9; *DKP* 364a18).[6] These terms are, of course, of general application, and are frequently used in our texts without any specific reference to followers of the Mahāyāna. Often, however, the connection is explicit, especially in those few passages in which the four classes are discussed in sequence. The best example of this is Chapter 6 of Lokakṣema's version of the *PraS*, which deals in turn with "Bodhisattvas who forsake desire and become *bhikṣus*" (*pusa qi aiyu zuo biqiu*[w]), "*bhikṣuṇīs* who are *mahāyāna-saṃprasthita*" i.e. nuns who have set out in the Mahāyāna (*biqiuni qiu moheyan-sanbazhi*[x]),[7] "white-robed *bodhisattvas* who cultivate the Way while living at home" (*baiyi pusa jujia xiudao*[y]) and "*upāsikās* who are *mahāyāna-saṃprasthita*" (*youpoyi qiu moheyan-sanbazhi*[z]) (*PraS* 909b12–910c29). We also find the expressions *bhikṣu-bodhisattva* or *bodhisattva-bhikṣu*, i.e. *biqiu pusa*[aa] (e.g. *PraS* 909b24,26–27; *AkTV* 752c22; *AsPP* 461b23), or, in the more idiosyncratic renderings of the *CGD* and the *UP*, *kaishi qujia wei* (or *xiu*) *dao*[ab] ("the revealer who has left home to pursue the Way": *UP* 15c3, 10–11; 19c1–2) or *mingshi chu-e*[ac] ("the enlightened one who eliminates evil": *CGD* 451b7, 458b10), in which *qujia*[ad] and its equivalents are probably doing service for an original Sanskrit *pravrajita*, "one who has gone forth". Often, however, it is simply clear from the context that the text is dealing with *renunciant bodhisattvas*, and the same holds true for lay *bodhisattvas*, who, when specified, are referred to as *zaijia*[ae] or *jujia*[af] *pusa* ("*bodhisattvas* who remain in the home") or *baiyi*[ag] *pusa* ("white-robed *bodhisattvas*"). Our texts devote considerable attention to these lay *bodhisattvas*, those who pursue the goal of buddhahood through observance of the Five Precepts, study of Mahāyāna *sūtras* and meditation. One passage in the *PraS* on the layman *bodhisattva* sums up much of this material particularly well:

> "White-robed *bodhisattvas* who, on hearing this *samādhi*, wish to study and cultivate it, should adhere firmly to the Five Precepts and keep themselves pure. They should not drink wine, nor should they give it to others to drink. They should not have intercourse with women—they should not have it themselves, nor should they teach others to have it. They should not have any affection for their wives, they should not hanker after their sons and daughters, and they should not hanker after possessions. They should always think longingly of leaving their wives and taking up life as *śramaṇas*. They should always keep the Eightfold Fast, and at the time of the Fast they should always fast in a Buddhist monastery. They should always think of giving without thinking that they themselves will get merit from it—they should give for the sake of all people. They should love their good teachers, and when they see *bhikṣus* who keep the precepts they ought not to despise them or speak ill of them."
>
> (*PraS* 910b12–21)

A number of common themes stand out here. These *bodhisattvas* may well be in the world, but they are not of it. Like lotuses, they grow out of the mud of the passions (*KP* 72–75), but because of their endowment with wisdom and skill-in-means they are undefiled by them (*KP* 48; *DKP* 351a2–4). To ensure that they remain undefiled, they must be strict in their adherence to the Five Precepts, especially those relating to intoxicants and sex, hence a negative attitude to all possible objects of attachment, particularly wives and children, is often recommended (e.g. *UP* 16c2–17a14, 18b7–c11; *AsPP* 455b20–26). This incidentally reveals the extent to which these *sūtras* were written from a male point of view, since *bodhisattvas* are never urged to regard their husbands as demons, sources of misery and so on. The household life is in fact a curse, since it destroys all one's 'roots of goodness' and only heaps more fuel on the fire of the passions (*UP* 17b20–c26), consequently *bodhisattvas* are best advised to quit it as soon as possible (*DKP* 353b26–27, 356c28–29). But as long as they choose to retain their lay status, they should not forget to treat their monastic counterparts with due reverence and generosity (*UP* 16a5–12, 19al–b24). It is clear, therefore, that there is a definite ambivalence in these texts about the position of lay *bodhisattvas*. On the one hand lay *bodhisattvas* frequently occupy the centre stage, both in terms of the narrative framework of the *sūtras* and in terms of the teachings expounded in them (this is especially so in the *PraS*, *CGD* and *UP*); on the other hand they are constantly exhorted to leave lay life behind, to become renunciants, and, what is more, to embrace the "ascetic qualities" (*dhuta-guṇa*), the discipline of the solitary forest-dwelling monk or nun (*KP* 17, *PraS* 903b24–25; cf. *AsPP* 461a10–b18). The *UP* even goes so far as to say that "no *bodhisattva* has ever attained the Way [i.e. awakening] as a householder: they all leave home and go into the wild, and it is by living in the wild that they attain the Way" (*UP* 19a21–22). As for the renunciant *bodhisattvas* themselves, in those passages which are explicitly or implicitly devoted to them, observance of the *Vinaya* looms large, together with respect for teachers, especially those from whom they hear Mahāyāna *sūtras*, be they male or female, lay or renunciant (e.g. *PraS* 909cl–9). Renunciants are urged to teach in their turn, to give the 'gift of the Dharma', but without any expectation of reward. For them too the virtues of the solitary life are extolled, as well as the conquest of desires and attachments, and they are warned of the perils of doubt and sloth. Most of this material, with its strong ethical emphasis, is of course fairly standard to all forms of Buddhism.

Despite some ambivalence about the value of the household life, we can see already that there is no doubt about the existence of both lay and renunciant *bodhisattvas*. Even *bodhisattvas* who have attained the advanced stage of 'non-regression', who are *avaivartika*, assured of attaining awakening, can still be laypeople (see e.g. *AsPP* 455b20–c5). However, when we turn to the question of whether women can be full *bodhisattvas*, the answer is not so clear. We have already observed that in listing the four classes of disciples, the *PraS* describes nuns and laywomen not as *bodhisattvas*, as it does the monks and laymen, but as

*mahāyāna-saṃprasthita*, "set out in the Mahāyāna". In other words it scrupulously avoids calling women *bodhisattvas*. Theoretically speaking, women should be capable of assuming the title *bodhisattva*. In nearly all our texts the teachings are addressed to "sons and daughters of good family" (Sanskrit: *kulaputra-kuladuhitṛ*; Chinese usually: *shan nanzi shan nüren*[ah]),[8] and it is made clear in most cases that both groups are expected to embrace the particular doctrine or practice being expounded. Furthermore, in some texts the terms "sons and daughters of good family" and "*bodhisattvas*" are used interchangeably (e.g. *AsPP* 446b10ff.; *AkTV* 759a16ff., 762a16; *WWP* 435b14–15; *UP* 15b24ff.), though it is not always the case that sons and daughters of good family are followers of the Mahāyāna (e.g. *AkTV* 763b17–21). In addition, women can conceive the aspiration to awakening (*bodhicitta*). This happens in at least two texts, the *DKP*, in which the 84,000 wives of King Druma take this step (359b11ff., 360c26ff.), and the *AsPP*, in which an *upāsikā* by the name of Dajie[ai] (Sanskrit equivalent unknown) has her eventual awakening predicted by Sākyamuni, who recalls her initial aspiration to it under the Buddha Dīpaṃkara.[9] Now those who have conceived the aspiration to awakening—who have, in other words, "set out in the Mahāyāna" (*mahāyāna-saṃprasthita*)[10]—are technically *bodhisattvas*, yet our *sūtras* display a consistent (or perhaps inconsistent?) reluctance to accord this title to women. This can only be because of a negative attitude towards the female sex, an attitude which is clearly demonstrable throughout these early texts. The *DKP* provides the best example of it. Even though the 84,000 wives of Druma conceive the aspiration to awakening, they are concerned about the fact that "it is difficult for a woman to attain *anuttara-samyak-saṃbodhi*", whereupon the Buddha proceeds to tell them at length about the things they have to do to leave off being women and quickly attain rebirth as males (*DKP* 361b9–362a2). Later he predicts their rebirth as males in the Tuṣita heaven in the presence of Maitreya (362a20–28). This theme of the undesirability of birth as a woman and the necessity of a change of sex is a common one: the *upāsikā* Dajie has to be reborn as a male before she makes any real progress (*AsPP* 458a18–19), while the same is true of Sadāprarudita's 500 female companions (*AsPP* 477b14–17). In other texts as well women are told that they should always aspire to rebirth as males (e.g. *CGD* 457b19–20). According to the *AsPP* (454b27–28) non-regressing *bodhisattvas* are never reborn as women, although the *DKP* claims that a *bodhisattva* endowed with skill-in-means may manifest in female form in order to teach women (358c11).[11]

When we look at the descriptions of buddhafields, which represent ideal worlds from a Buddhist point of view, we find that either women are not present at all, as in Druma's *buddhakṣetra* Candravimala (*DKP* 362a17), or they are infinitely more beautiful and virtuous than the women of this world, as in Akṣobhya's *buddhakṣetra* Abhirati (*AkTV* 755c28–756a2). The portrayal of the female inhabitants of Abhirati is especially revealing (756b3–15), since they are supposed to lack the vices of the women of this world, who are said to be "ill-favoured and ugly, with harsh tongues, jealous of the Dharma and addicted to

heretical practices". For the paragons of femininity in Abhirati, by contrast, fine clothes and jewelry literally grow on trees, they feel no pain or weariness in pregnancy or childbirth, and they are free of "offensive discharge from the stinking place" (undoubtedly the 'polluting' flow of menstrual blood), all thanks to the former vow of Akṣobhya (see *AkTV* 753a11–16 for this; cf. *AsPP* 455b19–25). The supposed foibles and defects of women are also highlighted in these *sūtras* by those passages which deal with the special regulations and requirements for nuns and laywomen who follow the Bodhisattva Path (see esp. *PraS* 910a15–b9, c6–29; *CGD*457b14–c29; see also *DKP* 361b11–362a2). Although there is considerable overlap in these passages with those pertaining to monks and laymen, certain qualities appear to be more readily ascribed to women, such as an excessive concern for personal adornment, spiteful and malicious gossip, jealousy, deceitfulness, superstition and fondness for non-Buddhist religious practices.

If we attempt to sum up our findings on the status of women as far as these early Mahāyāna *sūtras* are concerned, we must conclude that although women, both lay and renunciant, are included as recipients of the new teaching on a theoretically equal footing with men, they are generally represented in such an unfavourable light as to vitiate any notion of the Mahāyāna as a movement for sexual equality. Compared with the situation in the Pāli Canon, in which women are at least as capable as men of attaining the highest goal, arhatship, the position of women in the Mahāyāna has hardly changed for the better, since women cannot attain buddhahood, and even the title of *bodhisattva* is withheld from them. Of course all this reflects the attitudes of the men (probably monks) who produced these texts, but this does not make the conclusion any less inescapable: although both men and women can ride in the Great Vehicle, only men are allowed to drive it.

Before we turn to the drivers and passengers of the "Small Vehicle", there is one other question we must deal with, that relating to the so-called "Celestial Bodhisattvas", Avalokiteśvara and the others, those compassionate agents of salvation who, according to some authorities, were provided by the Mahāyāna in response to the devotional needs of the masses. It has been suggested that these figures were called *mahāsattvas* ("Great Beings") to distinguish them from other *bodhisattvas*.[12] There is no evidence for such a distinction in our texts: *mahāsattva* (probably signifying "one whose aspiration or courage is great") is widely used together with *bodhisattva*, and is virtually a synonym for it (see *AsPP* 427b13–27 for a discussion of its meaning). The double expression *bodhisattva-mahāsattva* is employed with reference to householders, occurs interchangeably with "sons and daughters of good family", and is even used when the talk turns to *bodhisattvas* who fall into error (e.g., *AsPP* 444c2, 446c22ff.). Be that as it may, a few well-known *bodhisattvas* do make an appearance. The name Avalokiteśvara occurs only twice, in lists of *bodhisattvas* in the *CGD* and the *UP*, suggesting that for the writers of our texts he was a nonentity, but Mañjuśrī, on the other hand, appears in six texts, one of which, the

*AjKV*, glorifies him in the most lavish terms. Given the heavy Perfection of Wisdom slant of most of these *sūtras*, this is not altogether surprising. The name of Maitreya also comes up fairly frequently. For all this, there is no evidence to suggest a widespread cult of the great *bodhisattvas*, and no passages recommend devotion to them. They function as symbols rather than as saviours. There is, however, evidence for the development of the cults of the Buddhas Amitābha and Akṣobhya by the late 2nd century C.E. Although the *Sukhāvatīvyūha* was not translated into Chinese until the middle of the 3rd century, the concept of rebirth in the *buddhakṣetra* of Amitābha as a religious goal is found in the *PraS*, while the *AkTV* is entirely devoted to Akṣobhya and Abhirati. But as far as *bodhisattvas* are concerned the *initial* message of the Mahāyāna is clear: people should not worship *bodhisattvas*, they should become *bodhisattvas* themselves.[13]

We have seen something of how the identity of the different classes of Mahāyānists in relation to each other was defined. What we must now look at is how these people saw themselves as a group *vis-à-vis* other Buddhists. The first thing that strikes one when reading these early Mahāyāna *sūtras* is their extreme defensiveness. The texts fairly groan under the weight of their own self-glorification, and kalpas can tick by while one wades through chapter after chapter proclaiming the merits of this doctrine or that practice. This is not simply due to literary hyperbole, to that Indian device, in common use since the *Vedas*, of praising one thing—a god, a place, a spiritual discipline—by claiming that it is superior to all other things of that class put together. This is clearly present, and should be taken with the appropriate grain of salt. But there is more to it than that, and this is indicated by the numerous passages excoriating the detractors of the new teachings, usually portrayed as idle and perverse monks who, when they are not busy spreading base calumnies and lies about the Mahāyāna, are out breaking the precepts. That the Mahāyāna remained for a long time a minority movement in the land of its birth is confirmed by the well-known reports of Chinese pilgrims in India. In its infancy it was probably even more insignificant numerically, despite the astonishingly prolific literary creativity it gave rise to, and was therefore quite naturally on the defensive. But on the defensive against what, one might ask? Nowadays it is common practice to think of Buddhism as dividing into two schools or sects, Mahāyāna on one side and Hīnayāna, more properly a group of sects, on the other. The early *sūtras* provide no strong support for this view. True, the term *hīnayāna* is found, translated as *xiaodao*[aj] ('Small Way'), but it occurs only *four* times (*KP* 25; *DKP* 357a19; *AsPP* 426b6; *CGD* 455c15), and is thus even rarer than the term *mahāyāna*, which is itself of infrequent occurrence, as we have seen. Much more frequent are translations of the terms *srāvakayāna* ("Vehicle of the Disciples") and *pratyekabuddhayāna* ("Vehicle of the Solitary Buddhas"), or simply "Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas", which is even more common.

*Pratyekabuddha* is generally transcribed as *pizhifo*[ak], but in several of our texts translations appear, e.g. *yinyuanjuefo*[al] in *CGD* 454b20 (implying *pratyayabuddha*) and *yuanyijue*[am] in *AkTV* 752a11, the latter meaning "by

one(self) awakened". *Śrāvaka*, on the other hand, has the literal sense of "hearer", but the standard Chinese equivalent *shengwen*[an], or "voice-hearer", seldom occurs in these early texts (e.g., *DKP* 351c20; *AjKV* 392b19). We find instead *dizi*[ao] ("disciple") or *(a)luohan*[ap], a transcription of *arhat*. In fact, in the overwhelming majority of cases *śrāvaka* is rendered as *aluohan*, and *śrāvakayāna*, which occurs less frequently, as *aluohandao*[aq], the "Way of the Arhats", a term which also does service for *arhattva* or *arhatphala*, the attainment of arhatship. I find this choice of words very significant. In his book *Buddhist Images of Human Perfection* (Delhi, 1982), Nathan Katz attempts to establish the essential identity of the *arhat* of the Pāli Canon and the *bodhisattva* of the Mahāyāna *sūtras*. In his concluding chapter he claims to have demonstrated that "the Mahāyāna texts speak in two distinct ways about the arhat. The first way of speaking is to show that the arhat is spiritually inferior to the bodhisattva; however, we have demonstrated that there is a conceptual distinction between the *śrāvaka* as one who thinks he has attained more than he actually has, and the true arhat. When speaking about the *śrāvaka* pejoratively, the standard context is in talk about meditation, and the *śrāvaka* is one who has mistakenly identified proficiency at meditation with *arahattā* itself. . . . The second way of speaking about the arhat in these early Mahāyāna texts is to identify the arhat with the bodhisattva" (Katz, 1982:275). Although I am in substantial agreement with Katz's overall thesis, and in general sympathy with any attempt to abolish imaginary discontinuities between the Mahāyāna and the Hīnayāna, I find that his conclusions in this particular respect rest on shaky ground, especially as regards the distinction he claims Mahāyāna *sūtras* make between *śrāvakas* and *arhats*. If our texts are anything to go by, there is no such distinction: by consistently rendering *śrāvaka* by *arhat*, Lokakṣema and his colleagues showed they were in no doubt that *śrāvakas* are both people who aspire to arhatship or *nirvāṇa* and people who actually attain that goal. Additional confirmation of this is furnished by the frequent appearance of well-known historical *arhats*, the great *śrāvakas* Śāriputra, Mahāmaudgalyāyana and others, as representatives of the supposedly inferior or partial dispensation.

Nor is there any doubt that the level these venerable figures represent, that of the *arhats* and the *pratyekabuddhas* (note that the *pratyekabuddhas* are frequently subsumed under the *arhats*), is one that is to be transcended by the *bodhisattvas* (see e.g. *AjKV* 398b4–14). A hierarchy of attainments is in fact envisaged, leading from the state of an ordinary person (Skt. *pṛthagjana*, Chinese *fanren*[ar]) at the bottom, through those of a 'stream-winner' (*śrotāpanna*, *xutuohuan*[as]), a 'once-returner' (*sakṛdāgāmin*, *situohan*[at]), a 'non-returner' (*anāgāmin*, *anahan*[au]), an *arhat* and a *pratyekabuddha* to the state of a *buddha* or a *tathāgata* at the top (e.g. *DKP* 366b15–16; *AsPP* 429b4–c12).[14] In aiming for the top, *bodhisattvas*, aspirants to the full awakening of a *buddha*, are warned repeatedly not to fall back to the level of the *arhats/śrvakas* and the *pratyekabuddhas* or to join their ranks, and such a regression is represented as a fearful misfortune (*DKP* 349c25–26, 350c7–11; *AkTV* 759a19–20, 760a11–12,

15–16; *AjKV* 391a19–20; *AsPP* 445b3–4, 447a14, 451b29–c22, 452a1ff.). This actually happens at one point in the *AsPP*, where 60 novice *bodhisattvas* attain arhatship despite themselves because they lack perfect wisdom and skill-in-means, in the same way that a giant bird without wings cannot help plummeting to earth from the top of Mt. Meru (*AsPP* 453c2–25). To avoid such a disaster, *bodhisattvas* must ensure that they are not contaminated by the attitudes of *arhats* and *pratyekabuddhas* (*DKP* 356b1–2, c9, 365a4–12; *AkTV* 761c25–26; *AjKV* 389c3; *AsPP* 460a2–4, 463c13–14; *PraS* 903c6), and they must resist the temptation to aspire to their goals, i.e., to opt for a premature *nirvāṇa*, to "achieve realisation midway" (*AkTV* 752a11; *AsPP* 448b25–28, 458c8–22, 459b5–10, 467a13ff.; *DKP* 350c11–14; *AjKV* 392c18ff.). The *śrāvakayāna* is characterised by attachment and limitation (*AjKV* 392b19–23), and those who opt for it do so primarily out of fear of *saṃsāra*, which renders them incapable of aspiring to buddhahood (*AjKV* 394c3ff.). Not only is their courage thus inferior to that of the *bodhisattvas*, but their wisdom is too (*KP* 78–79; *LAN* 751b20–21; *AsPP* 426b2, c19–20, 427b24, 462b17). Unlike the advanced *bodhisattvas*, they have not really overcome fear and attachment; for that reason the Great Śrāvakas and arhats Mahākāśyapa, Śāriputra, Mahāmaudgalyāna and company are unable to resist the temptation to dance to the celestial music of King Druma; however, the novice *bodhisattvas* are equally helpless (*DKP* 351c8ff.). In another context, these great *Arhats* lament their own inferior attainments (*AjKV* 394c3–395b22). Therefore *bodhisattvas* are infinitely superior to *śrāvakas/arhats* and *pratyekabuddhas* (*KP* 80–85, 90; *AsPP* 468a27–28; *DKP* 365c22–28). Those who teach "the Bodhisattva Path" are one's "good friends" (*kalyāṇa-mitra*), while those who direct one towards "the Paths of the Śrāvaka and the Pratyekabuddha" are "bad friends" (*pāpa-mitra*) (*KP* 13; *AsPP* 427b1–10; *DKP* 360a13–18).

Despite all this rather uncomplimentary material, however, the attitude displayed by these texts towards *arhats* is not entirely negative. Since *bodhisattvas* aspire to bring *nirvāṇa* to all sentient beings, it is not surprising that they should try to make a place for *arhats* in their picture of the world, even if it is not in the foreground. In most of our *sūtras* the great *śrāvakas*, the *bhikṣus* who were *arhats*, are present, and presumably they are not just there to act as figures of fun or to lend the proceedings an air of historical authenticity, even if these are important functions they sometimes perform. One has only to think, for example, of the role Subhūti plays in the *AsPP*. The followers of the *bodhisattva* way clearly had to face the fact that, despite all their polemics and hyperbole, they shared their membership of the *saṅgha* with people who continued to believe that arhatship was the ultimate goal of Buddhist practice, who sought their own liberation above all else, and who, as members of the *saṅgha*, were still worthy of respect (e.g. *UP* 16a5–12). Therefore, even in their idealised descriptions of the *buddhakṣetras*, and in the predictions (*vyākaraṇa*) which are scattered throughout these texts, they usually envisage the peaceful co-existence of *bodhisattvas* with *śrāvakas*. Although in the buddhafield Sadāvighuṣṭa (?) in

the *AjKV* (397a8) there is only a *bodhisattva-saṅgha*, and in Druma's world Candravimala in the *DKP* (362b19–21) "there are no other paths . . . only the host of *bodhisattvas*, all of the Mahāyāna" (see also *DKP* 363b9–10 for a similar case), in other instances *śrāvakas* are also present. For example, the *śrvākas* of Akṣobhya's world Abhirati are described at length (*AkTV* 756c24–758a15), and they share that world happily with *bodhisattvas*. In fact, Abhirati teems with so many *arhats* that it is described as an *arhat-kṣetra* (*AkTV* 762c5–13), while both those who follow the Śrāvakayāna and those who follow the Bodhisattvayāna there are assured of freedom from molestation by Māra (*AkTV* 755a1–3, 758b15–21, 759b24–26; see also *AjKV* 393c24–27; *AsPP* 458a26–27, 469a20–21; and *CGD* 455a4 for further examples of co-existence). In a similar vein, most of our texts carry, at particular points in the narrative, descriptions of realisations attained by various members of the audience in response to the new teachings. In these the attainment of "stream-winning" and arhatship figures prominently (e.g., *DKP* 367a27-b1; *AjKV* 406a27-b1; *KP* 138, 145, 149; *AsPP* 451a12–15, 453b29-c3; *PraS* 919b18–22; *CGD* 454b2–7; *UP* 19b24–27).

Because of the general philosophical standpoint of the Perfection of Wisdom literature, one would expect to find in these early texts at least some acknowledgement of the purely conventional nature of the distinctions we have been talking about. The *AsPP*, for one, makes such an acknowledgement, conceding that all the grades of attainment from *śrotāpatti* to buddhahood partake of the same fundamental "suchness" (*tathatā*), in which there are no distinctions (450a4–8), that all these grades spring from the Perfection of Wisdom (451a17–24), and that in terms of "suchness" neither the three vehicles (of *śrāvakas, pratyekabuddhas* and *buddhas*) *nor* the one vehicle can be apprehended (454a18–29). Consequently *bodhisattvas* should not think of themselves as far from the attainments of *arhats* and *pratyekabuddhas* and close to buddhahood (466b13-c14).

For all that, distinctions *are* set up in these texts. The issues are extremely complex, and the evidence is equivocal, but not so equivocal as to support Katz's contention that the much-maligned *śrāvakas* of these early Mahāyāna *sūtras* were merely conceited monks who mistook their own meditational attainments for final liberation, not full *arhats*—or his claim that *bodhisattvas* and *arhats* are essentially the same. This may in fact be so, but that is not what the texts say. What they do tell us is that the early adherents of the Bodhisattvayāna—who were probably very much in the minority—were prepared to go to great lengths to uphold their ideal against what they conceived to be the traditional goal of Buddhist practice, namely arhatship or *nirvāṇa* for oneself alone, but they were not prepared to write off the rest of the Buddhist *saṅgha* or sever their own connection with it by the wholesale use of such terms as "Hīnayāna" and "Mahāyāna" as sectarian categories. It is interesting to compare this situation with that which currently obtains in Burma, a supposedly Theravādin country. In his *Buddhism and Society* (2nd ed., University of California Press, Berkeley, 1982), pp. 61–63, Melford Spiro notes the long tradition in

Burma of aspiration to buddhahood, and the presence of a small number of people who, without bringing in any notions of Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna, refer to themselves as *hpaya laung* ("Embryo Buddhas"), i.e. *bodhisattvas*.[15] Can this be a distant echo of the state of affairs that once existed in India, before followers of "the Bodhisattva Path" started to cut themselves off from their fellow Buddhists, and before the distinction between the two 'vehicles' was anything more than a different perception of the goal of the religious life?

Turning now to other religious paths, we find that there is nothing unequivocal about the attitude displayed in these texts towards them. The usual designation for these paths is *waidao*[av], "outside ways", although *yudao*[aw] ("other ways"), *yidao*[ax] ("different ways") and *xiedao*[ay] ("heretical ways") are also found (as well as combinations of these, with or without *ren*[az] added), rendering a number of Sanskrit terms such as *lokāyata* (*KP* 5, 111), *dṛṣṭikṛta* (*KP* 18), *dṛṣṭigata* (*KP* 65, 109), *parapravādin* (*KP* 95), *anyatīrthya-parivrājaka* (*AsPP* 433c21ff.) and so on. These non-Buddhist ways are not to be followed by the *bodhisattva* (*DKP* 356c7, 357a7-8; *AjKV* 398a22, 406a6; *PraS* 910c11, 912b29, 915a26, 916c7–8; *UP* 16a15–16), but rejected and overcome (*DKP* 357c4; *PraS* 911c5), their followers ideally being brought within the Buddhist fold (*DKP* 358c20–21, 359a25–28). Their defeat is often closely linked with the defeat of Māra (*DKP* 348c15, 362a17). Several *sūtras* go beyond these vague generalities, and urge followers of the Bodhisattvayāna not to sacrifice to or worship the gods, but go only to the Triple Gem for refuge (*DKP* 361b15–16; *PraS* 910c10–12; *UP* 17a20-21; *AsPP* 454b25–27, 455c9). However, only one text, the *WWP*, goes into any detail on any non-Buddhist religious practices—in this case brahmanical ritual (438a10ff.). The evidence is slim, but what there is suggests that the Bodhisattvayāna demanded that its adherents devote themselves exclusively to Buddhism, and regarded other faiths as beyond the pale.

Bringing all our findings together, we can make the following observations. The point of view presented in the earliest Chinese translations of Mahāyāna *sūtras* is most probably that of Mahāyānist *bhikṣus*. For this group *bodhisattvas* were certainly not just semi-mythical beings raised on high to receive the adoration of the masses, but real flesh-and-blood people, among whom they counted themselves, who had conceived the *bodhicitta*, the aspiration for awakening, and were pursuing the appropriate course of training either in the monastic context or in the household life. There is no sign at all of any cult of the "Celestial Bodhisattvas"; this was probably a later development. As far as these *bodhisattva-bhikṣus* were concerned, women were part of the movement, and the new teachings were addressed to them as well as to men. At the same time the texts reveal that women were not regarded as in all respects the spiritual equals of men. If this kind of attitude was enshrined in the *sūtras*, which, after all, embody the theories and ideals of the movement, it is hardly likely that in practice the women who followed the Mahāyāna fared any better than their Śrāvakayāna sisters. The Mahāyāna takes a hard line against other faiths, in theory at any rate, but its attitude to the rest of the Buddhist fold is characterised by ambivalence

and defensiveness, and it gives every appearance of being a minority movement struggling to maintain the authenticity and validity of its teachings with a truly prodigious degree of polemical 'overkill'. It may well be the case that in its attack on the *arhat*-ideal the Mahāyāna was setting up a straw man, but this is not the place to decide whether the attainments of the *bodhisattvayānika* and the *śrāvakayānika* were essentially identical. Buddhahood may or may not be the same as arhatship, but it is certain that the followers of the Mahāyāna placed a higher premium on aspiration to it, which implies that they perceived a difference. What is equally certain is that Buddhism was (and still is) plagued by a problem. We could call it the problem of the "ever-receding ideal". In Gautama's own time, many hundreds of people attained arhatship like him. Four or five hundred years later, when the Buddha had grown idealised and remote, and *arhats* were few and far between, many people vowed to attain awakening, and thereby became *bodhisattvas*. One wonders how many centuries passed before even bodhisattvahood became as remote an ideal as buddhahood, and the goal had to be reformulated anew. Perhaps, however, it is in the nature of religious systems not only to undergo continual transformation and renewal, but also to present us with ideals which are always just out of reach, with paradises that shimmer on the margins of possibility, and with vehicles which we know we could all ride to salvation, if only we could catch up with them and climb aboard.

## Notes

1 See e.g., H. Dayal, *The Bodhisattva Doctrine in Buddhist Sanskrit Literature* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1932), pp. 45, 222–225; R. Robinson & W. Johnson, *The Buddhist Religion* (3rd ed., Wadsworth, Belmont, 1982), pp. 74–75; E. Conze, *Buddhism: Its Essence and Development* (Bruno Cassirer, Oxford, 1951), pp. 87–88, 120; D. Kalupahana, *Buddhist Philosophy* (University Press of Hawaii, Honolulu, 1976), pp. 121–126; N. Katz, *Buddhist Images of Human Perfection* (Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1982), p. 280.

2 This is the view of Dayal (see *Bodhisattva Doctrine*, pp. 31, 35), whose work has had a seminal effect on this area of study. Dayal's understanding of the *bodhisattva*-ideal is reflected in the writings of many other scholars. A particularly good example is T. Ling, *The Buddha* (Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1976), pp. 19–20.

> Later on in India a form of Buddhism emerged, alongside the Theravada, which was characterised by beliefs in, and practices associated with, heavenly beings who possessed superhuman spiritual power, and who were known as Bodhisattvas. . . . In both senses of the word religion (belief in spiritual beings *and* belief in the sacred), the Bodhisattva school of Buddhism . . . was a religious system. . . . For Mahayana Buddhism the sacred has its special focus in the heavenly realm where dwell the Bodhisattvas, the superhuman spiritual beings who are said to exert their influence to help poor struggling mortals. In directing their attention to this supramundane heavenly community the Mahayanists showed themselves correspondingly less concerned with the need to order the earthly society of men in such a way that would facilitate the pursuit of the Buddhist life, and would enhance and encourage human effort. More reliance on heavenly power

meant that less attention needed to be given to earthly factors. The Mahayanists became more concerned with devotions to the heavenly beings, with ritual and speculation, and less with the nature of the civilization in which they lived.

See also pp. 202–203, 242–247.

3 See E. Zürcher, "A New Look at the Earliest Chinese Buddhist Texts", an unpublished paper delivered at the Leiden Symposium on State, Ideology and Justice in Early Imperial China, 1–5 Sept., 1975, also his "Late Han Vernacular Elements in the Earliest Buddhist Translations", *Journal of the Chinese Language Teachers Association*, XII, 3 (Oct. 1977), pp. 177–203, to both of which articles I am considerably indebted. See also my own unpublished paper "The Earliest Chinese Translations of Mahāyāna Buddhist Sūtras: Some Notes on the Works of Lokakṣema".

4 T. = Takakusu Junjirō and Watanabe Kaikyoku, eds., *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō*, 100 vols. (Tokyo, 1924–35). Throughout this paper references to the texts will be to page, lateral column and line of the *Taishō* edition, except in the case of No. 8, the *Kāśyapa-parivarta*, where citations will be according to the sections of von Stäel-Holstein's edition.

5 On the epigraphical evidence, which tends to corroborate one of the findings of the present paper, see G. Schopen, "Mahāyāna in Indian Inscriptions", *Indo-Iranian Journal*, 21 (1979) pp. 1–19.

6 These phonetic transcriptions (*biqiu biqiuni*, etc.), which later became standard in Chinese translations of Buddhist *sūtras*, are used throughout our group of texts, except that in Redaction B of the *PraS upāsaka* is also rendered as *qingxinshi*[ba] ("man of pure faith") and *upāsikā* as *qingxinnü*[bb] ("woman of pure faith"), while non-standard translations of all four terms are found in *CGD* and *UP*.

7 Lokaksema's use of *qui* ("seek") before his transcription of *mahāyāna-saṃprasthita* is redundant but revealing (since it puts women one step further back from full participation), otherwise the accuracy of his translation is confirmed by the Tibetan text of the *PraS*, 10A and 12A: *theg-pa chen-po-la yang-dag-par zhugs-pa'i dge-slong-ma* (or *dge-bsnyen-ma*).

8 On the use of these terms see D. Paul, *Women in Buddhism*. (Asian Humanities Press, Berkeley, 1979), pp. 106–110.

9 In Chap. XIX of the Sanskrit text of the *AsPP* this figure appears as Gaṅgadevā or Gaṅgadevī Bhaginī, i.e. "the woman Gaṅgadevī". Although E. Conze in his English translation of the *sūtra* (*op. cit.*, pp. 219–221) calls her a 'Goddess' or 'Goddess of the Ganges', a lead which D. Paul follows in her version of the passage (*op. cit.*, pp. 180–184), this woman is no more a goddess than Āryadeva is a god. Gaṅgadevī's story, however, later produced some interesting echoes, when the *AsPP*'s prediction that she would attain awakening as a male was frustrated, as it were, by the Tibetan tradition. The *rnam-thar* of Ye-shes mtsho-rgyal (757–817), one of the chief consorts of Padmasambhava, lists Gaṅgadevī as one of the previous incarnations of that famous Tibetan *yoginī*: see K. Dowman, *Sky Dancer* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1984), p. 6 and Tarthang Tulku, *Mother of Knowledge* (Dharma Publishing, Berkeley, 1983), p. 11 (both translators appear to perpetuate the erroneous divinisation, but I have not been able to check the Tibetan text myself). Since Ye-shes mtsho-rgyal is similarly identified with the unnamed merchant's daughter who befriends the *bodhisattva* Sadāprarudita in Chaps. XXX–XXXI of the *AsPP*, the author of the *rnam-thar* is clearly attempting to link her with Prajñāpāramitā herself.

10 See *AsPP* 427b29-c2, c27, 429b6-7 for occurrences of this term with *bodhisattva* and *mahāsaṃnāha-saṃnaddha*.

11 On this general theme see N. Schuster, "Changing the Female Body: Wise Women and the Bodhisattva Career in Some *Mahāratnakūṭa Sūtras*", *JIABS*, 4, 1 (1981), pp. 24–69.

12 See e.g., Robinson and Johnson, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

13 This point is, in my view, not invalidated by the existence of such passages as *KP* 88, which claims that just as the new moon is more worthy of homage (*namaskāra*) than the full, so too *bodhisattvas* are more worthy of homage than the Buddhas. When taken in context, this hyperbolic glorification of the *bodhisattva*-path can hardly be construed as a 'call to worship'.

14 For different renderings of some of these grades, see *UP* 16a6–8.

15 Spiro's understanding of the *bodhisattva*-ideal as one which "permits salvation to be achieved by a mechanical process—the transfer of merit from Bodhisattva to devotee" and "demands no personality transformation" (*op.cit.*, p. 62) is, as we have seen, wide of the mark, at least as far as the early Mahāyāna is concerned. The supposed "misreadings" of the *bodhisattva* doctrine which he imputes to the Burmese (see esp. p. 63, n. 33) are perfectly compatible with our early *sūtras*.

## Chinese glossary

a. 道行般若經
b. 般舟三昧經
c. 伅真陀羅所問如來三昧經
d. 阿闍世王經
e. 兜沙經
f. 內藏百寶經
g. 文殊師利問菩薩署經
h. 遺日摩尼寶經
i. 阿閦佛國經
j. 成具光明定意經
k. 法鏡經
l. 摩訶衍
m. 大道
n. 菩薩道
o. 行菩薩道者
p. 行(求)菩薩道者
q. 菩薩
r. 開士
s. 明士
t. 四輩弟子
u. 四部弟子
v. 比丘比丘尼優婆塞優婆夷
w. 菩薩衆愛欲作比丘
x. 比丘尼求摩訶衍三拔致
y. 白衣菩薩居家修道
z. 優婆夷求摩訶衍三拔致
aa. 比丘菩薩
ab. 開士去家為(修)道
ac. 明士除惡
ad. 去家
ae. 在家
af. 居家
ag. 白衣
ah. 善男子善女人
ai. 怛竭
aj. 小道
ak. 辟支佛
al. 因緣覺佛
am. 緣一覺
an. 聲聞
ao. 弟子
ap. (阿)羅漢
aq. 阿羅漢道
ar. 凡人
as. 須陀洹
at. 斯陀含
au. 阿那含
av. 外道
aw. 餘道
ax. 異道
ay. 邪道
az. 人
ba. 清信士
bb. 清信女

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# IS THE *DHARMA-KĀYA* THE REAL "PHANTOM BODY" OF THE BUDDHA?[1]

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## I. Introduction

The Trikāya doctrine of Buddhism, i.e., the doctrine that the Buddha has three "bodies," is notorious for its complexities. Attributed to the Yogācāra, but regarded as typical of the Mahāyāna in general, it is customarily cited in books on Buddhism in terms of the triad *dharma-kāya, saṃbhoga-kāya* (or *sāṃbhogika-kāya*) and *nirmāṇa-kāya* (or *nairmāṇika-kāya*). Taking these in ascending order of abstraction, the *nirmāṇa-kāya*, usually translated "apparitional body," "phantom body," "transformation body," etc., is the physical manifestation of Buddhahood, the ordinary perishable human form, as exemplified by the "historical Buddha," Siddhārtha Gautama. The *saṃbhoga-kāya* ("body of bliss," "reward body," "enjoyment body," etc.) is a more exalted and splendid manifestation of the enlightened personality, still in the realm of form, but visible only to *bodhisattvas*, those of advanced spiritual capabilities. By contrast, the *dharma-kāya* ("*Dharma*-body," "Body of Truth," "Cosmic Body," "Absolute Body," etc.) is both formless and imperishable, representing the identification of the Buddha with the truth which he revealed, or with reality itself. As such the *dharma-kāya* is often linked with various terms for reality, such as *dharmatā*, *dharma-dhātu*, and so on, and has even been regarded as a kind of Buddhist absolute, or at least at one with it.[2] In this light the *dharma-kāya* is understood as the primal "source" or "ground" from which the other two types of bodies emanate.[3] While many scholars are content to describe this in purely abstract terms, others impute personal characteristics to it;[4] and at least one writer has gone so far as to compare it to the Christian idea of Godhead.[5]

As a summary of the Trikāya doctrine this is, of course, over-simplified. We are dealing here with a complex theory which underwent many accretions and refinements, as Buddhists continued down through the centuries to speculate on the nature of Buddhahood, on the nature of reality, and on the relationship

between them.[6] It is hardly surprising, then, that attempts to plot the course of such arcane speculations have not always been entirely successful in reaching a clear consensus, although the arguments advanced, even in recent writing on the subject, do tend to follow similar lines. A good example of this is the authoritative treatment by Nagao, "On the Theory of Buddha-body (*Buddha-kāya*)," first published in English in 1973.[7] Generally Nagao distinguishes three phases: an initial one-body theory, a two-body theory, and the three-body theory elaborated by the Yogācāras. According to him (p. 104), the two-body theory (i.e., *rūpa-kāya* and *dharma-kāya*) "became stabilized in a variety of earlier sūtras,[8] and in early Mahāyāna sūtras, the *Prajñāpāramitā*, the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, and so forth. The rūpa-kāya is the Buddha seen in a human body, while the dharma-kāya is the Buddha's personality seen in the dharma or dharma-nature." Elsewhere (pp. 106–7) Nagao states that the two-body theory was the one held "until the time of the Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra and the time of Nāgārjuna," even though the raw materials for the third body, the *saṃbhoga-kāya*, were also to hand before the time of Asaṅga and Vasubandhu, as a consequence of the *bodhisattva*-concept and the idea that a *bodhisattva*'s performance of meritorious actions produced a body which was their manifest "reward." Nagao's article contains many valuable observations, but, as we shall see, some of its assertions are rather too imprecise, both chronologically and philosophically, to be of much use in unravelling the early development of the doctrine at issue. Another recent treatment of the subject by Makransky (1989) also describes certain features of the putative earlier two-body theory before the Yogācāras remodelled it (see esp. pp. 51–53), and distinguishes it sharply from the previous Mainstream[9] (in this case, Sarvāstivādin) formulations. This analysis, too, is open to question in certain respects, as I shall show. In these and other articles on the subject[10] there is a general tendency to postulate a one-body/two-body/three-body progression, in terms of which a single personality is divided into a physical and a "spiritual" body, and then the physical body is further split in two, yielding the final complement of three. Some writers, however, point to the existence of three bodies even in the Pāli sources, what one scholar has called the "primitive triad," i.e., *pūti-* or *cātur-mahābhūtika-kāya, manomaya-kāya*, and *dhamma-kāya*.[11] The first is the corruptible physical body formed out of the four elements, while the second is the mind-made body with which the Buddha visits the celestial realms (believed by some to be a forerunner of the *saṃbhoga-kāya*); the third is the so-called "*Dhamma*-body." Now, although both these ways of approaching the subject—the assumption of a linear process, and the belief that the Pāli Canon contains an embryonic Trikāya schema—raise certain difficulties, I do not propose in this paper to discuss the evolution of the Trikāya theory in its entirety, since that would be a mammoth undertaking. What I wish to do is address one aspect of it only, viz., the early development of the idea of *dharma-kāya*, in the hope that clarifying this will open the way to a better understanding of Mahāyāna buddhology as a whole.

## II. *Dharma-kāya* in texts translated by Lokakṣema

One possible way of investigating the initial development of the *dharma-kāya* idea in the Mahāyāna context is to look for it in the small group of *sūtras* translated into Chinese by Lokakṣema towards the end of the 2nd century C.E., given that these texts constitute our earliest datable literary evidence for Mahāyāna Buddhism.[12] What, if anything, do these ancient documents tell us about the "prehistory" of the Yogācāra Trikāya theory, and about Mahāyānist notions of *dharma-kāya* in particular? Fortunately, we need not start from scratch: preliminary work in this area has already been done by Lewis Lancaster, who some time ago examined the various Chinese versions of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā-prajñā-pāramitā-sūtra* (*AsPP*) with careful attention to the development of a number of key doctrinal concepts, among them *dharma-kāya*.[13] In view of the importance of the *AsPP* as the seminal Prajñāpāramitā text, clearly the most influential of all the scriptures on which Lokakṣema worked, let us begin by reviewing Lancaster's findings.

Lancaster (1968: 92–100) originally isolated five occurrences of the term *dharma-kāya* in the Sanskrit text of the *AsPP*, and examined the relevant portions of the various Chinese translations in order to determine the development of this concept in that *sūtra*.[14] He found that the term does not appear in what he called the "early text" (represented by the first three Chinese versions, the oldest of which is Lokakṣema's, the *Daoxing [banruo] jing*, T.224), except for one passage, but is attested by the "middle" and "late" texts, even though these do not entirely agree with the Sanskrit and Tibetan versions. On this basis he concluded (1974: 36) that although the later texts display the two-body theory (*rūpa-kāya* and *dharma-kāya*), "it appears that the earliest ideas in Mahāyāna sūtras were neither the two-body nor the three-body ones, but rather the notion of one Buddha-body." Although this statement in particular points us in the right direction, and Lancaster's findings are indeed interesting, some of the inferences he drew from them now merit closer scrutiny. If we look carefully at the passages in question, attending at the same time to what previous scholarship has made of them, it will become apparent that what Lancaster saw as the progressive introduction into the text of the "uniquely Mahāyāna" doctrine of the *dharma-kāya* can be understood in quite different terms.

The five occurrences of *dharma-kāya* in the Sanskrit text of the *AsPP* are:[15]

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Chap. IV (Vaidya 1960: 48). | Not found in T.224. |
| 2. | Chap. IV (Vaidya 1960: 50). | Not found in T.224. |
| 3. | Chap. XVII (Vaidya 1960: 168). | Not found in T.224. |
| 4. | Chap. XXVIII (Vaidya 1960: 228). | Found in T.224. |
| 5. | Chap. XXXI (Vaidya 1960: 253). | Not found in T.224. |

The first of these is perhaps the most important; the passage is worth citing in full (the key sentences are underlined):

> *Śakra āha sacen me bhagavan ayaṃ jambudvīpaḥ paripūrṇaś cūlikābaddhas tathāgata-śarīrāṇāṃ dīyeta iyaṃ ca prajñā-pāramitā likhitvopanāmyeta tata ekatareṇa bhāgena pravāryamāṇo 'nayor dvayor bhāgayoḥ sthāpitayor imām evāhaṃ bhagavan prajñā-pāramitāṃ parigṛhṇīyām / tat kasya hetoḥ yathāpi nāma tathāgata-netrī-citrīkāreṇa / etad dhi tathāgatānāṃ bhūtārthikaṃ śarīram / tat kasya hetoḥ uktaṃ hy etad bhagavatā dharma-kāyā buddhā bhagavantah / mā khalu punar imam bhikṣavah sat-kāyam kāyam manyadhvam / dharma-kāya-parinispattito mām bhiksavo draksyatha / esa ca tathāgata-kāyo bhūta-koti-prabhāvito drastavyo yaduta prajñā-pāramitā /*

Although there can be no doubt about the fundamental intent of the text here—that the Buddhas and their relics are worthy of veneration solely by virtue of their realisation of perfect wisdom, which is therefore pre-eminent—many previous treatments of this important passage of the *AsPP* have failed to take account of one crucial point. Translations by Conze (1975: 116), Kajiyama (1984: 11) and Makransky (1989: 65) have all rendered *dharma-kāya* in the phrase *dharma-kāyā buddhā bhagavantaḥ* as a noun, Kajiyama in the singular ("Buddhas consist of the Dharma-body"), Conze and Makransky in the plural ("The Dharma-bodies are the Buddhas, the Lords").[16] However, this raises a problem: if *dharma-kāya* here is a noun, how can it possibly stand in the plural, as it most certainly does in the Sanskrit? Given the later understanding of this term in the Buddhist tradition, can there be more than one *dharma-kāya*? After all, not one of the other similarly elusive words which are supposed to do duty for "reality"—*dharmatā, tathatā, bhūta-koṭi*, etc.,—ever occurs in the plural, indeed could not: since these "things" are supposed to be formless, beyond quantification, beyond all duality, how could there be more than one of them?

The same problem pertains to two of the other citations listed above. In the passage in Chap. XVII, in fact, the relevant wording (underlined below) is identical:

> *tasmād bodhisattvo mahāsattvo 'vinivartanīyaḥ sad-dharma-parigrahāya paramudyogam āpadyate atītānāgata-pratyutpannānāṃ buddhānāṃ bhagavatāṃ premnā ca gauraveṇa ca / dharma-kāyā buddhā bhagavanta iti dharme prema ca gauravaṃ copādāya sad-dharma-parigrahaṃ karoti*

Here the *iti* following the key phrase suggests that it is taken from another source, as is more strongly indicated in Chap. IV by the words *uktaṃ hy etad bhagavatā*, which in Mahāyāna *sūtras* commonly introduce citations from Mainstream canonical texts. Again, Conze (1975: 207) translates: "the Dharma-bodies are the Buddhas, the Lords."

In Chap. XXXI, however, the wording is somewhat different:

> *evam eva kula-putra ye kecit tathāgata-rūpeṇa vā ghoṣeṇa vā abhiniviṣṭāḥ te tathāgatasyāgamanaṃ ca gamanaṃ ca kalpayanti / ye ca tathāgata-syāgamanaṃ ca gamanaṃ ca kalpayanti sarve te bāla-jātīyā duṣprajña-jātīyā iti vaktavyāḥ tadyathāpi nāma sa eva puruṣo yo 'nudake udaka-samjñām utpādayati / tat kasya hetoḥ* <u>*na hi tathāgato rūpa-kāyato drastavyah*</u> / <u>*dharma-kāyās tathāgatāh*</u> / *na ca kula-putra dharmatā āgacchati vā gacchati vā / evam eva kulaputra nāsti tathāgatānām āgamanaṃ vā gamanaṃ vā /*

The key words here are paraphrased by Kajiyama (1984: 14) as "a Tathāgata should not be considered as a *rūpakāya*; Tathāgatas consist of *dharmakāyas*," and translated by Conze (1975: 291) as "For a Tathagata cannot be seen from his form-body. The Dharma-bodies are the Tathagatas . . ."[17]

This way of construing the texts has certain theoretical implications. For example, it is on the basis of his understanding of these passages that Kajiyama (1984: 12–13) speaks of a change in the idea of the "Buddha-body," and the emergence of a "theory of the two-bodied Buddha" at a comparatively early stage in the development of the Sanskrit text of the *AsPP*. Thus, he concludes (p. 13), "the physical Buddha body came to be called *rūpakāya*, while the Buddha body equated with prajñāpāramitā was called *dharmakāya*," and he infers that the two-body theory using these terms must have been formed by the middle of the 4th century, since the passage from Chap. XXXI is attested in Kumārajīva's translation of the *AsPP* (although the passages from Chaps. IV and XVII are not).

This is, however, problematical, for imposing a two-body schema on these passages leads us into the philosophical incoherence mentioned above: if there is such a thing as *the dharma-kāya*, how can it be plural? Fortunately, the solution to this problem lies ready to hand, having been pointed out by Edgerton as long ago as 1953 (*BHSD*, s.v.):[18] the compound *dharma-kāya* in these particular citations is not a *tatpuruṣa* (or *karmadhāraya*) substantive but a *bahuvrīhi* adjective.[19] This usage, as Edgerton noted, is the only one attested for Pāli; in fact, the term occurs but once in the entire Pāli Canon. The sole citation in question is in the *Aggañña-sutta* of the *Dīgha-Nikāya* (D iii 84), where *dhamma-kāya, brahma-kāya, dhamma-bhūta* and *brahma-bhūta* are listed as designations for the Buddha. These are all adjectives, although not all translators have recognised or preserved them as such.[20] The message of the text is that followers of the Buddha may claim to be his sons, not because they have been engendered by his physical body, but through being the offspring of the *dhamma*,[21] because the Buddha is "*dhamma*-bodied" or has the *dhamma* as his body (*dhamma-kāya*),[22] the Buddha is the *dhamma* itself (*dhamma-bhūta*).[23] This equation of the Buddha with the *dhamma* is also found in a number of well-known passages in the Pāli Canon, for example at S iii 120, where Gautama says to Vakkali, long stricken

by illness and desperate to see the Buddha, "What is the point of your seeing this corruptible body (*pūti-kāya*)? Whoever sees the *dhamma*, Vakkali, sees me; whoever sees me sees the *dhamma*."[24] Along similar lines are Gautama's celebrated instructions to his followers to take the *dhamma* itself as their guide following the demise of his body.[25] The use of the adjective *dhamma-kāya* in the *Aggañña-sutta* can be seen as reflecting these ideas. The Buddha is equated with the *dhamma*; therefore, he is said to be *dhamma-kāya*, to "have the *dhamma* as his body." To put it in more elegant English, the Buddha is truly "embodied" in the *dhamma*, rather than in his physical person, which, as Vakkali is reminded, has no real significance at all. The adjective *dhamma-bhūta* is virtually synonymous, i.e., to describe the Buddha as *dhamma-bhūta* is to say that the Buddha is the *dhamma* itself.[26]

Turning back to the *AsPP*, we see then that the three passages thus far in question are making the same point: not that the Buddhas are the *dharma-kāyas*, but that they are those who are embodied in the *dharma*. While this assertion may still require explication, it seems not to lead us straight into the philosophical quicksands of the developed Trikāya theory. In fact, there is nothing particularly Mahāyānist about it at all, as it occurs in the Pāli scriptures, even if only once. Indeed, as we have noted, in two of the *AsPP* occurrences in question there are indications that the crucial phrase may well have been a quotation from a Mainstream text, although we have yet to identify the source. It is certainly the case that the Mainstream—in this case Theravādin—interpretation of the term suits the context perfectly, far better, in fact, than the Trikāya-influenced reading. This is especially clear in the passages in Chaps. XVII and XXXI, where the interpretation suggested resolves the awkward *non sequiturs* of Conze's translation. Thus in Chap. IV Śakra, faced with a choice between the world packed to the ceiling with relics of the Buddha and a written copy of the teaching or *dharma* of the Perfection of Wisdom, expresses his preference for the latter "out of reverence for the guide of the *Tathāgatas*, since it is their genuine bodily relic. Why? Because the Lord has said 'The Buddhas and Lords have the *dharma* as their body,"' i.e., the *dharma* is their true body, and thus it is their true relic as well.[27] Similarly, the passage in Chap. XVII may be rendered freely as follows:

> "Therefore the *bodhisattva* and *mahāsattva* who is incapable of regression makes a supreme effort to take up the true *dharma* out of love and respect for past, future and present Buddhas and Lords. Feeling love and respect for the *dharma*, with the thought 'The Buddhas and Lords have the *dharma* as their body,' he/she takes up the true *dharma*."

That is to say, the Buddhas are embodied in the *dharma*, and so to love and respect the *dharma* is to love and respect the Buddhas. And lastly, the relevant passage in Chap. XXXI may be translated like this:

> "In the same way, son of good family, those who fixate on the *Tathāgata's* physical appearance or his voice imagine that the *Tathāgata* comes and goes, but it has to be said that all those who imagine that the *Tathāgata* comes and goes are inherently foolish and stupid, just like the man who perceives water where none exists. Why is that? Because a *Tathāgata* is not to be seen through his physical body; *Tathāgatas* have the *dharma* as their body. The nature of *dharma*, son of good family, neither comes nor goes. In the same way, son of good family, there is neither coming nor going for the *Tathāgatas*."

What is important here is the *dharma* which constitutes the true identity of the Buddhas, not any particular "body," however abstract. Just as coming and going cannot be predicated of the *dharma* itself, or of the nature of *dharma(s)* (*dharmatā*), it cannot be predicated of the Buddhas insofar as they are identified with the *dharma*.[28]

We are still left, however, with three instances in the *AsPP* where *dharmakāya* appears as a noun. The first is the sentence *dharmakāya-pariniṣpattito māṃ bhikṣavo drakṣyatha* in the Chap. IV passage cited at length above. This is rendered by Kajiyama as "Monks, you should see me as the accomplishment of the Dharma-body," by Conze as "Monks, you should see Me from the accomplishment of the Dharma-body." However, since we are dealing here with a continuation of a (probably Mainstream) scriptural quotation, we ought first to consider interpretations of *dharma-kāya* which are consistent with Mainstream doctrine, to see whether they fit the context better.

Although *dharma-kāya* as a noun is not attested in the Pāli Canon, it does occur in other Mainstream sources. To begin with, there is a handful of passages in the Chinese translations of the Āgamas where the appearance of the term *fa-shen*, "body of *dharma(s)*,"[29] indicates that the underlying Indic may have had *dharma-kāya* as a substantive. These passages were exhaustively studied by Anesaki (1982),[30] whose findings may be found summarised in Demiéville's article in the *Hōbōgirin*, s.v. *busshin* (1930: 176–177). There is one clear reference in the *Saṃyuktāgama*, now generally assigned to the Mūlasarvāstivādins,[31] and three in the *Ekottarāgama*, thought by many to be part of the Mahāsāṃghika canon.[32] In the *Saṃyuktāgama* passage King Aśoka justifies his lavish veneration of the *stūpa* of Ānanda with reference to the latter's key role in the preservation and transmission of the *dharma*. Asked by his ministers why these offerings surpass all others, he says "The body of the *Tathāgata* is the body of *dharma(s)*, pure in nature. He [Ānanda] was able to retain it/them all; for this reason the offerings [to him] surpass [all others]."[33] In the opening verses of the *Ekottarāgama* (T.125, I, 549c14), which have no Pāli counterpart, we read: "The appearance of the Master of the Śākyas in this world was very brief. Although the physical body has passed away, the body of *dharma(s)* endures." And later, in the same passage (550a 1–2): "The body of *dharma(s)* of the *Tathāgata* is indestructible; it abides in the world forever, and does not cease. When gods and

human beings get to hear it, they perfect the fruit of the Way." This idea is subsequently thematised in Section LXIV, where the Buddha and Ānanda discuss the survival of the *dharma* after the death of the *Tathāgata* (787b17–29):

> Then Ānanda said to the Lord: "The Buddhas and Lords of the distant past had an extremely long lifespan, precept-breakers were rare and there was no impurity. Now, however, people have a very short lifespan, not exceeding ten decades. After the Buddhas of the past attained extinction, how long did the *dharma* they left behind remain in the world?"
>
> The Buddha said to Ānanda: "After the Buddhas of the past attained extinction, the *dharma* did not remain for long."
>
> Ānanda said to the Buddha: "After the *Tathāgata* attains extinction, how long will the true *dharma* remain in the world?"
>
> The Buddha said to Ānanda: "After I attain extinction, the *dharma* will remain for a long time. After the extinction of the Buddha Kāśyapa, the *dharma* which he left behind lasted seven days. Right now, Ānanda, you [may think] the *Tathāgata* has few disciples. Don't hold this view: there are countless thousand *koṭis* of disciples in the east, and countless thousand *koṭis* of disciples in the south. Therefore, Ānanda, you should think: 'The lifespan of our Buddha Śākyamuni is extremely long. Why? Although the physical body undergoes extinction, the body of *dharma(s)* persists. This is its meaning, which we should ponder, take up and put into practice.' "

Finally, in Section XXXI (719b7–8), Anuruddha remarks that "The body of the *Tathāgata* is the body of the true *dharma* (*rulai shenzhe zhenfa zhi shen*)."

As becomes especially clear when one considers the contexts in which they are embedded, all these Āgama citations make a specific identification of the term translated as *fa-shen*, "body of *dharma(s)*," with the *dharma* or *dharmas* demonstrated by the Buddha, or with the true *dharma*, i.e., with his teachings or his Teaching considered as a whole. It is this which is described as pure, indestructible, eternal, remaining after the *nirvāṇa* of the physical body, and, according to one telling passage, something that one can *hear*. But there is a problem: can we be sure that the underlying Indic word was indeed *dharma-kāya*? For there is at least one other candidate for the position, and that is *dharma-śarīra*. The occurrence of this compound in the *AsPP* has already been noted above. To what extent its meaning differs from *dharma-kāya* remains to be determined, but some light is thrown on this in the lengthy discussion by the unknown author of the *Karma-vibhaṅgopadeśa* (see Lévi 1932: 157ff., 172ff.).[34] In this text we find an explicit equation of *dharma-śarīra* with the teaching of the Buddha, the hearing or realisation of which far outweighs the vision of the Buddha's physical body, the "body produced by mother and father."[35] The theme of the text, then, is similar to that of the *Aggañña-sutta*, viz., that the *dharma* in the sense of the

teaching is the true body (and in this case "relic")[36] of the Buddha; and in line with the text's own definition the noun *dharma-śarīra* is best interpreted as a *karmadhāraya*, i.e., as "the body/relic which consists in the *dharma(s)*." Since all this is obviously congruent with the Āgama passages we have just looked at, one has to ask whether the word translated in them as *fa-shen* was not *dharma-śarīra* rather than *dharma-kāya*.

In the absence of Indic fragments or parallels, we cannot answer this question with certainty. Only for the *Saṃyuktāgama* passage can we refer to the *Divyāvadāna*, where we see that neither compound is attested;[37] the other Āgama passages remain in doubt. However, it is quite clear that *dharma-kāya* is at least possible, for it definitely occurs in the sense required in other Mainstream sources. One of these is the *Milinda-pañha*, a non-canonical Pāli text preserved by the Theravādins. The relevant passage, as translated by Horner (1965: 99–100), runs as follows: "the Lord has attained final nibbāna in the element of nibbāna that has no substrate remaining (for future birth); it is not possible to point to the Lord who has gone home and say that he is either here or there; but, sire, it is possible to point to the Lord by means of the body of Dhamma, for Dhamma, sire, was taught by the Lord."[38] This echoes a previous statement in the same section, to the effect that "He who sees the *dhamma* sees the Lord, for the *dhamma* was taught by the Lord."[39] These variations on what are by now familiar themes indicate that the substantives *dharma-kāya* and *dharma-śarīra* certainly overlap in meaning, even if they may not be entirely synonymous. A second Mainstream citation of interest here is a passage in the Mūlasarvāstivādin Vinaya (see Dutt 1950: 185–186), where Śroṇa Koṭīkarṇa expresses his strong desire to see the physical body of the Buddha, since the "seeing" (*darśana*) of Buddhas is as rare as the Uḍumbara flower. His words are: "*On the authority of my preceptor* [my emphasis] I have seen the Lord by means of the body of *dharma(s)*, but not by means of the physical body (*dṛṣṭo mayopādhyāyānubhāvena sa bhagavān dharma-kāyena no tu rūpa-kāyena*)." In both these sources I would maintain that *dharma-kāya* clearly refers not to some "spiritual body,"[40] but, in line with the Āgama passages cited above, to the Buddha's teachings, acquired, in Śroṇa Koṭīkarṇa's case, on the authority of his preceptor Mahākātyāyana.[41] However, one question remains, which I have left open up till now: if we accept that the first element of the nominal compound *dharma-kāya* denotes the Buddha's teachings, should we continue to translate it in the singular, as is customary, or in the plural?

Although it may not seem so at first sight, the answer to this question is suggested by a number of scholastic Sarvāstivādin sources, which use the term *dharma-kāya* to refer to the special, undefiled *dharmas* or qualities which make a Buddha a Buddha.[42] There appear to have been differences of opinion as to the identity of these *dharmas*. According to Vasubandhu's *Abhidharma-kośa-bhāṣya* some scholars identified them with the 18 qualities exclusive to a Buddha (*āveṇika-dharmas*),[43] viz., the ten powers (*bala*), four assurances (*vaiśāradya*), three applications of mindfulness (*smṛtyupasthāna*) and great compas-

sion (*mahākaruṇā*).[44] Other Sarvāstivādin sources, however, equated them with the more modest list of the five *anāsrava-skandhas*, or "incorruptible constituents," viz., *śīla, samādhi, prajñā, vimukti* and *vimukti-jñāna-darśana* (see, e.g., Lamotte 1958: 689–690), an identification which is also found in the work of the great Theravādin commentator Buddhaghosa.[45] Whatever the composition of the list, however, *dharmakāya* in this context clearly means the *collection* of the (undefiled) qualities or principles which the Buddha has realised in his own person and revealed to others. That is to say, the use of the Sanskrit word *kāya* turns on the same ambiguity possessed by the English word "body" or the Latin *corpus*; it means "body" in the sense of a complete collection of constituent parts, ensemble, entirety, totality. And this is in itself an indication that the first term in the compound—at least when it is a substantive—is indeed to be construed as plural.[46] Further, there is a second ambiguity built into the term: the *dharmas* in question are both taught by the Buddha, in which case we might call them "teachings" or "truths," and they are realised in his person, in which case we might call them "qualities" (in the latter sense they are more obviously plural). This ambiguity is probably intentional and fundamental. We find it acknowledged, for example, in a commentary on the *Vajracchedikā* ascribed to Asaṅga, who distinguishes two types of *dharma-kāya:* the "*dharma-kāya* as words" and the "*dharma-kāya* as realisation."[47] If we accept then that this interpretation, "body of *dharmas*," with its multiple ambiguities, well established for Mainstream scholastic sources, can also be applied to Mainstream scriptural texts in which the substantive *dharma-kāya* appears, we must concede that renditions such as "Body of the *Dharma*," "Body of Truth" or "Body of the Teaching" are mistaken, or at the very least too limiting, since a collection cannot consist of one thing.[48]

To return now to the Mahāyāna sources, it can be seen that the rather multivalent Mainstream interpretation of the substantive form of our term—"body/collection of qualities/truths/teachings"—is consistent with the *AsPP* citations under consideration. The remainder of the passage from Chap. IV, therefore, may be translated as follows: " 'Again, *bhikṣus*, you ought not to think that this existing body is [my real] body. *Bhikṣus*, you should see me in terms of the full realisation of the body of *dharmas* (i.e., the totality of undefiled qualities or truths).'[49] And one ought to see that this [real] body of the *Tathāgata* is constituted by[50] perfect truth, i.e., by the Perfection of Wisdom." This interpretation fits the context, and raises fewer philosophical difficulties.

A similar reading can be applied to the other occurrence of *dharma-kāya* as a noun in Chap. IV (no. 2 in the list above; no equivalent in any Chinese translation), where it is said that just as the king's representative is inviolable and worthy of worship by the great mass of people because of the authority (*anubhāva*) of the king, so too the preacher of the *dharma* (*dharma-bhāṇaka*) is inviolable and worthy of worship because of the authority of the body of *dharmas* (*dharma-kāyānubhāvāt*).[51] It seems to me far more likely that the preachers in question owe their reception to the inherent power of the teachings

they purvey than to some abstract but nonetheless awe-inspiring theistic principle; that is to say, the king's servants represent the king, and derive their authority from him, the *dharma*-preachers represent the *dharma*, and derive their authority from it.

Finally, the same reading is also preferable for the fourth passage listed above, which happens to be the only one represented in the early Chinese versions. The Sanskrit text reads:

> *sumanasikṛtā ca sudhṛtā ca suparyavāptā ca supravartitā ca tvayā Ānanda iyaṃ prajñā-pāramitā kartavyā / suparivyaktenākṣara-pada-vyañjanena suniruktā codgrahītavyā / tat kasya hetoḥ atītānāgata-pratyutpannānām hi Ānanda tathāgatānām arhatām samyak-sambuddhānām dharma-kāyateti tām dharmatām pra-mānīkṛtya* /

Most previous commentators have recognised that this has nothing to do with the Trikāya,[52] even though Conze's rendition (1975: 267) blurs the issue: "For as the dharma-body of the past, future and present Tathagatas is this dharma-text authoritative." Lokakṣema's Chinese translation (468c16–18) reads:

> "You should carefully study [the Prajñāpāramitā] and accept it in its entirely, bear it all in mind, keep it, and copy out its words correctly without error or loss [since] it is equivalent to and not different from the body of the scriptures of the Buddhas [*fo-jing-shen*] of the past, future and present."

The use of the Chinese word *jing* (canonical text, scripture) for *dharma* is standard with Lokakṣema, and so the presence of the word *dharma-kāya* in the earliest accessible version of the *AsPP* is hardly to be doubted. Here the text is obviously playing on the aforementioned ambiguity of the term *dharma*, meaning both teaching and principle or law of existence, as the Buddha advises Ānanda to ponder, remember, master, etc., the Prajñāpāramitā with minute care, because "one ought to accept that nature of things [which the Prajñāpāramitā teaches] as authoritative, as being the body of *dharmas* of all past, future and present *Tathāgatas*."[53]

My contention is, then, that even in the later Sanskrit text of the *AsPP*, where *dharma-kāya* clearly occurs as a noun, it is perfectly comprehensible in terms of the multivalent Mainstream interpretation of the word, as the body or collection of qualities, principles, truths, or teachings. Elsewhere it appears as an adjective, a usage which is also found in Mainstream sources. What is common to both grammatical forms in the different Mainstream sources we have reviewed is that the emphasis is on the prior member, *dharma*, not on *kāya*. The same is true for all occurrences in the *AsPP*. Therefore there is no real support for Lancaster's contention that *dharma-kāya* is one of the specifically *Mahāyāna* doctrines

inserted into the text of the *AsPP* in the course of its development, even though it is true that many of the citations are not attested in the three early Chinese translations.[54]

Is there, then, any support in the rest of the Lokakṣema corpus for a distinctively Mahāyānist interpretation of *dharma-kāya*? It is in the *Lokānuvartanā-sūtra* (*LAn*)[55] that we would most expect to encounter material relating to this question, for the *LAn* is in essence a meditation on buddhology proper. In this work, which is closely affiliated with the Mahāsāṃghika-Lokottaravādins, we do indeed find a sustained attempt to harmonise conflicting notions of Buddhahood, in particular to reconcile the obvious frailties and limitations of the historical human being with a more glorious conception of the physical and spiritual attributes of an enlightened personality. Most of the text, then, turns on the discrepancies between what are in the classical Trikāya theory called the *nirmāṇa-kāya* and the *saṃbhoga-kāya*, even though the second of these terms is not used in the extant Tibetan version.[56] The Tibetan for *dharma-kāya* does occur twice, however, in verses 37 and 79, in both of which it appears in the predicative position, i.e., it is almost certainly rendering the *bahuvrīhi* adjective.[57] The relevant verses read as follows:

Verse 37:
*/ yid kyi sku dang ldan pas na*[58] */*
*/ de bzhin gshegs pa chos sku yang /*
*/ mag can sku ni ston mdzad pa /*
*/ 'di ni 'jig rten 'thun 'jug yin /*
"Even though, being endowed with a mental body,
The *Tathāgatas* have the *dharma* for a body,
They manifest a corruptible body;
This is conformity with the world."

Verse 79:
*/ de bzhin gshegs pa chos sku ste /*
*/ gcig ci 'dra bar de bzhin kun /*
*/ 'on kyang tha dad ston mdzad pa /*
*/ 'di ni 'jig rten 'thun 'jug yin /*
"Since the *Tathāgatas* have the *dharma* for a body,
As one is, so are they all;
Nevertheless, they make a show of multiplicity;
This is conformity with the world."

There can be no doubt that the text which Lokakṣema had in front of him also contained these two verses, in much the same form. His version of them (T. 807) runs:

The Buddha's body is like an illusion. [He] calls the scripture/*dharma(s)* (*jingfa*)[59] [his] body. To others he displays an impure body.

> It is in conformity with worldly custom that he engages in such a manifestation. (752a18–19)
> All Buddhas share the one body; [they] regard the scripture/*dharma(s)* (*jingfa*) as [their] body. The Buddhas manifest teaching the scripture/*dharma(s)* to others. It is in conformity with worldly custom that they engage in such a manifestation. (753a19–20)[60]

Not only does Lokakṣema's translation demonstrate the existence of the term *dharma-kāya* in his text of the *LAn*, but the Chinese wording, almost identical in both verses (*yi jingfa ming wei shen, yi jingfa wei shen*), shows clearly that he construed it as a *bahuvrīhi*. Using the classical Chinese *yi X wei* Y construction ("to take X as Y," "to regard X as Y," etc.), he split the compound just as we might.[61] Neither the Chinese nor the Tibetan version of the *LAn*, then, attests *dharma-kāya* in its nominal form. Both versions suggest, in addition, that the Sanskrit text of the relevant *pāda* in both verses read *dharma-kāyā tathāgatāḥ*, which is the same phrase found in Chap. XXXI of the *AsPP*.

Although a full discussion of the buddhology of the *LAn* is beyond the scope of this paper, we ought to note that in v. 37 the Tib. term *yid kyi sku* is attested, which the Chinese glosses as a body "like an illusion," but which must represent *manomaya-kāya*, normally translated as "mental body" or "mind-made body." Set beside *dharma-kāya*, this is contrasted with *rnag can sku*, which is surely Skt./Pāli *pūti-kāya*.[62] We have here what Lancaster calls the "primitive triad" (see above), the three bodies supposedly found in the Pāli Canon. However, since *dharma-kāya* is an adjective, only two actual bodies in the proper sense of the word are attested in this verse, as indeed they are in the Pāli Canon. Both these bodies, the mind-made and the corruptible, belong to the world of material forms.

Turning next to the *Pratyutpanna-buddha-saṃmukhāvasthita-samādhi-sūtra* (*PraS*), we find a single obscure citation, at Section IX, where the Tib. has *chos kyi sku dang 'dra bar rtogs pas nam mkha' lta bu rnams su 'gyur ba*. In my English translation of this text I tentatively rendered this as "become those who resemble space in their understanding [of it as?] similar to the Body of Dharma," the problem being partly the presence in all three Chinese versions of what seems to be an equivalent for *animitta*. Thus I suggested that the original sense of the passage may have been "become those who understand the Body of Dharma to be signless like space."[63] T.418's (Lokakṣema's) equivalent for *dharma-kāya* here is *jing-zang-shen*, literally "body of the treasury of scriptures," while T.416 has simply "all *dharmas*," suggesting once again that *dharma-kāya* means the totality of *dharmas*.[64] The citation is obscure, but the presence of *dharma-kāya* as a substantive in the earliest known version is beyond doubt, in a context which seems to have nothing to do with buddhology as such.

In the *Kāśyapa-parivarta* (*KP*), another important text in the Lokakṣema corpus, the word *dharma-kāya* does not appear, but *rūpa-kāya* occurs once, in

Section 125, in a context which is relevant to the discussion. The Sanskrit text runs: *dharmato pi tathāgataṃ na samanupaśyati kaḥ punar vāda rūpakāyeṇa*, i.e., "[the *bodhisattva*] does not view the *Tathāgata* even in terms of the *dharma(s)*, how much less in terms of his physical body."[65] Lokakṣema's version—"he is not even attached to the Buddha-*dharma(s)*, how much less constantly [?] attached to form?"—conveys the intent of the Sanskrit reasonably well. The Jin dynasty translation accords with it too, but the Qin and Song versions both introduce the term *fa-shen* (= *dharma-kāya*). This could represent translator's license, or a different Sanskrit recension of the text which sought to clarify its sense along the lines suggested by the passages in Chaps. IV and XXXI of the *AsPP*. That is to say, one does not "view" the Buddha even in terms of the body of qualities or principles which he has realised (*dharma-kāya-pariniṣpattitas*), to say nothing of viewing him in terms of his physical person (*rūpa-kāyatas*).

As we move on to other less well-known works of early middle Mahāyāna *sūtra*-literature, a significant new pattern begins to emerge. In the *Druma-kinnararāja-paripṛcchā-sūtra* (*DKP*),[66] to begin with, although there are no occurrences of the term *chos kyi sku* in the Tibetan text, Lokakṣema's Chinese version (T.624) contains several occurrences of *fa-shen*, the standard Chinese equivalent for *dharma-kāya*. In Section 2D (349c27–28), for example, we find: "What does it mean to say that *bodhisattvas* know the realm of all human beings without being separated from the body of *dharmas*?" which in the Tib. text is *ji ltar na byang chub sems dpa' khams sna tshogs la yang rnam par blta la chos kyi dbyings las kyang mi g.yo ba rnams lags*. Here Lokakṣema appears to have used *fa-shen* to render *dharma-dhātu* (Tib. *chos kyi dbyings*), which is also indicated by the appearance of *fa-jie*, the standard Chinese equivalent for *dharma-dhātu*, in Kumārajīva's rendition of the same passage (T.625, 368c17–18).[67] The same wording is repeated in the Tib. text at 2M, and the renditions in T.624 (350c15) and T.625 (369c8) agree with those for the first citation. There can be little doubt, therefore, that Lokakṣema has rendered *dharma-dhātu*, contrasted with *sattva-dhātu*, as *fa-shen*, presumably because he believed both terms to refer to the totality of *dharmas*. The same thing happens at 2G where Tib. has *chos kyi dbyings*, T.625 (369a18–19) has *fa-jie* and T.624 (350a21) has *fashen*.[68]

A more pertinent citation is found at 7K, where the Tibetan reads *chos kyi dbyings bsam gyis mi khyab pa la zhugs pas / sangs rgyas thams cad sangs rgyas gcig tu shes pa*, "knowing that all Buddhas are one Buddha, by virtue of [their] entry into the inconceivable *dharma-dhātu*"; i.e., all Buddhas are the same by virtue of their common "entry" into, or understanding of, the inconceivable *dharma-dhātu* (Skt. *acintya-dharma-dhātvavatāra*). T.624 (358b5–6) has "all Buddhas are nothing but one Buddha. For what reason? Because [their] penetration of the body of *dharmas* (*fa-shen*) is incalculable,"[69] while T.625 (377b18–19) agrees exactly with the Tibetan, i.e., construing *acintya* as qualifying *dharma-dhātu* rather than *avatāra*. At 8Cv54 T.624 (360b26) again has *fa-shen* where Tib. has *chos kyi dbyings* and T.625 (379c14) has *fa-jie*. A further

occurrence at 9G is especially interesting: in enumerating the six *anusmṛtis*, the Tib. text has *sangs rgyas kyi sku thob par bya ba'i phyir / sangs rgyas rjes su dran pa*, i.e., "commemoration of the Buddha in order to acquire the body of a Buddha." Here too T.625 (381a13–14) agrees with the Tibetan, but T.624 (361b29) has "constantly think of the Buddha and obtain the body of *dharmas* (*fa-shen*)." This is unexpected; we could postulate corruption, but it is also possible that the translator has settled on *fa-shen* as conveying the true sense of *buddha-kāya*. It is not easy to see how Lokakṣema has arrived at his translation of 10Hv25, but the appearance of *fa-shen* in T.624 (363a11), *zhu-fa* in T.625 (383a16), and *chos rnams kun* in Tib. suggests that *sarva-dharma* stood in the original Indic text. At 11D, in a list of 64 "*dharma*-sounds," we again find *fa-shen* in T.624 (363c18) where Tib. and T.625 (384a18) indicate *dharma-dhātu*. The three versions differ substantially from this point on, and it is interesting to note that the following items in T.624 are the ten powers, the four assurances and the eighteen exclusive *dharmas* (not listed in the two other versions), suggesting an association between these qualities and *dharma-dhātu* as equated with *dharma-kāya*. At 14D *chos kyi dbyings* in Tib. again finds a counterpart in *fa-shen* in T.624 (366a22), but the sentence in question is missing from T.625 (see 387b22–26). Finally, a less clear-cut case occurs in Section 15E, where T.624 (366c5) has: "they are able to practice and guard the *dharma*; through this they obtain the body of *dharmas* (*fa-shen*)." The Tib. text at this point (Section 15E) has *dam pa'i chos yongs su srung ba dang/sangs rgyas bcom ldan 'das rnams kyi dam pa'i chos 'dzin par 'gyur ba*, i.e., "they [the *bodhisattvas*] protect the true *dharma*, and they obtain the true *dharma* of the Buddhas and Lords," while Kumārajīva's version (T.625) reads "they protect the true *dharma* and uphold the treasury of the Buddha-*dharma(s)* (*fo-fa-zang*)." Although not attested by the Tibetan, therefore, *dharmakāya* is suggested by both Chinese versions of 15E, in a context which implies it carries the meaning "collection of *dharmas*." The most significant finding in relation to the *DKP*, however, is that in some half-a-dozen cases Lokakṣema has translated *dharma-dhātu* by *fa-shen*.

Despite the doctrinal richness of the *Ajātaśatru-kaukṛtya-vinodanā-sūtra* (*AjKV*), as well as the presence in it of apparent Yogācāra tendencies, I have not been able to locate a single occurrence of *dharma-kāya* in the Tibetan text. However, once again Lokakṣema's translation (T.626) contains a number of uses of the term *fa-shen*, and the passages in question need careful investigation. At 390b1, to begin with, we read that *bodhisattvas* "do not deviate from twelve-fold causation; they consider the body of *dharmas* (*fa-shen*) to be neither increasing nor decreasing." This corresponds to Tib. *rten cing 'brel bar 'byung ba dang mi 'gal ba 'i phyir des chos thams cad* (Derge: *nyid* for *thams cad*) *la brtag par bya'o // thog ma nas ma skyes pa'i phyir chos gang yang ma bri ba dang ma 'phel bar bya'o* (Peking Mdo Tsu 225a6–7). None of the other complete Chinese versions (T.627, T.628) supports *dharma-kāya*, so it appears *fa-shen* has been used by Lokakṣema to denote all *dharmas*. At 390b28–29 the text states: "They see the Buddhas, but do not think of seeking them through form.

Why is that? Because of the body of *dharmas* (or: because they have the *dharma* as body?)." However, Tib. (Peking 226b2–3) has only *sangs rgyas thams cad mthong mod kyi / gzugs la dmigs pa'i 'du shes kyang mi skyed*, "although they see all the Buddhas, they do not give rise to any conception based on form," which is supported by the other Chinese translations, indicating that T.626 has probably incorporated a gloss. At 392b we also come across a number of occurrences of *fa-shen* (392b2, 4–5, 15), but the corresponding Tibetan text has only *chos* or *chos nyid* (see Peking 232al-8), while the Chinese version of Dharmarakṣa (T.627, 410b18-c3) has *fa-jie* or *fa*, that of Fatian (T.628, 432b17–29) simply *fa*. At 398b6–7, in the course of Mañjuśrī's exposition of the *bodhisattva-piṭaka*, Lokakṣema's text states: "The *dharmas of bodhisattvas* are unsurpassed, because they penetrate the body of *dharmas*, because of great compassion." But when we compare this with the Tibetan, we find: *byang chub sems dpa'i bslab pa ni tshad med pa'i rjes su song ba / snying rje chen pos zin pa'o //* (Peking 253a2–3), "The *bodhisattva*'s training starts with the immeasurable states and is completed by great compassion. Similarly, T.627 (418a15) and T.629 (439c21) mention only compassion." Taken with the clumsy repetition of "because" in T.624, the testimony of the later versions indicates again that a gloss has been incorporated in the text. Later occurrences, however, follow the pattern laid down in the *DKP*. At 398c1 *fa-shen* corresponds to *chos kyi dbyings* in the Tibetan text (see Peking 254a2), *fa-jie* in T.627 (418c1) and T.628 (440a14); at 401b9–12 *fa-shen* occurs several times, corresponding to *chos kyi dbyings* or possibly *chos thams cad* (*sarva-dharma*) in the Tibetan (see Peking 263a7–263b1) and to *fa-jie* in both T.627 (422b1–7) and T.628 (443a3–4); and finally, at 402c1–3, *fa-shen* again occurs several times, corresponding to *chos kyi dbyings* in the Tibetan (see Peking 267b7–268a2) and *fa-jie* in the later Chinese versions (see T.627, 423c15–18, and T.628, 44b25(?)).

It would be inappropriate here to give the full text of all the passages cited, but it is clear enough that Lokakṣema has used *fashen* throughout the *AjKV* to designate the totality of *dharmas*, generally in places where his Indic original had *dharma-dhātu*. The two exceptions to this rule are almost certainly glosses which have been erroneously incorporated in the text.

There are three other texts belonging to the Lokakṣema corpus: T.458, the *Wenshushili wen pusa-shu jing* (*WWP*); T.280, the *Dousha jing* (*DSJ*, an early version of a small section of the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra*); and T.313, the *Achu-fo guo jing*, a translation of the *Akṣobhya-tathāgatasya-vyūha* (*AkTV*).[70] Lokakṣema's translations of the first two of these texts contain no references to *dharma-kāya*, and the same is true, as far as I am aware, of the later Chinese or Tibetan versions, where they exist.[71] A perusal of the various versions of the *AkTV*, however, reveals one problematical occurrence of the term, in Chap. 1, Sections 69–70 (according to the divisions in the translation by Dantinne).[72] Here the Tibetan text states that when the Buddha Akṣobhya used to pursue the course of training of a *bodhisattva* he never once experienced any bodily or mental fatigue while expounding or listening to the *dharma*, the reason being that, ever since

the time he conceived his initial aspiration to awakening, he had realised the *dharma-kāya*. Further, when he was pursuing the course of training of a *bodhisattva* and listening to the *dharma* he thought "In the same way that I now love the *dharma*, so too may beings in my Buddha-field also be lovers of the *dharma*, and not those who do not love it!"[73] At first blush this seems coherent, coherent enough for Dantinne to have translated it without comment—but is it? I think not; a closer inspection of the Chinese translations shows us why. Bodhiruci's Chinese translation (T.310, No. 6), produced in the period 706–713, reads (104c8–13):

> "Śāriputra, when in the past he was practising the course of practice of a *bodhisattva*, the *Tathāgata Arhat Samyaksambuddha* Akṣobhya did not experience physical or mental tiredness when expounding the *dharmas* or listening to them. Why? Because when he first conceived the aspiration to cultivate the course of practice of a *bodhisattva*, he obtained the awesome power (*weili*, usually = *anubhāva*) of the body of *dharmas* (*fashen*. Śāriputra, when in the past he was practising the course of practice of a *bodhisattva*, the *Tathāgata Arhat Samyaksambuddha* Akṣobhya made the following vow: 'May all the *bodhisattvas* and *mahāsattvas* in my *buddha-kṣetra* obtain the perfection of the body of *dharmas*, just like me!' "[74]

In Lokakṣema's version, however, the passage in question runs as follows (755a4–8):

> The Buddha said to Śāriputra: "Long ago, when the *Tathāgata Arhat Samyaksambuddha* Akṣobhya was practising the way of the *bodhisattva* and listening to or expounding the *dharma*, his body experienced no fatigue, and his mind felt no fatigue either. Śāriputra, long ago, when the *Tathāgata* Akṣobhya was pursuing the way of the *bodhisattva* and listening to or expounding the *dharma*, [he said:] 'This is how [I] love the *dharma*. May the *bodhisattvas* and *mahāsattvas* in my *buddha-kṣetra* love the *dharma* like this!' "

At first sight we might be disposed to accept Bodhiruci's text: Akṣobhya possesses a "*dharma*-body" which is immune to fatigue, and he wishes that on other *bodhisattvas*. But how can *bodhisattvas* (especially those at the beginning of their career) be said to "realise" the *dharma-kāya* before they become Buddhas? And why is there only one occurrence of the term in the Tibetan, as opposed to two in Bodhiruci's version? Lokakṣema's text, with no occurrences at all, offers the solution: in the transmission of the Indic, *dharma-kāma* has been corrupted to *dharma-kāya*, quite possibly under the influence of Yogācāra Trikāya speculations.[75] The Tibetan translation, which stands closer to Lokakṣema's version than to Bodhiruci's,[76] represents a half-corrupted text, since it still preserves one

*dharma-kāma* (*chos 'dod pa*). Originally the *AkTV* was making the unproblematical point that from the very first Akṣobhya was indefatigable in teaching and hearing the *dharma* because he loved it so much, and so he vowed that the *bodhisattvas* of his Buddha-field would be similarly endowed with this unwearying love for the *dharma*. The "because he loved it so much" appears to have been missing from the earliest version of the text, if we go by T.313. The Tibetan wording (*chos kyi sku rab tu bsgoms par gyur pa'i phyir ro*) suggests that a gloss containing the words *dharma-kāma-prabhāvita*[77] may have been subsequently incorporated into the text before being corrupted to *dharma-kāya-prabhāvita*.[78] In an even later form of the text this corruption appears to have infected the last sentence of the passage as well, leading to the peculiar message of Bodhiruci's rendition.[79]

Let us now review our findings. We have seen that in the small group of texts translated into Chinese by Lokakṣema in the latter half of the 2nd century C.E. there is no evidence for any developed Mahāyāna notions of *dharma-kāya*, even though this term was clearly familiar to him and does occur, albeit rarely, in several of his translations in the two grammatical forms and senses attested in Mainstream sources. That is to say, it is either (1) a *bahuvrīhi* adjective, meaning "having the *dharma* as body" or "embodied in the *dharma*" (twice in the *LAn*), or (2) a *tatpuruṣa* substantive, with the sense "body of *dharmas*," *dharmas* in this case being understood as qualities, principles of existence, truths, or teachings (once in the *AsPP*, once in the *PraS*, possibly once in the *DKP*). Furthermore, even when the term does appear more frequently in later Chinese, Tibetan and Sanskrit versions of the scriptures in question, it still exhibits the same forms and meanings, as was demonstrated in particular for the Sanskrit text of the *AsPP*. An additional and unexpected discovery was that the Chinese term *fa-shen*, the standard equivalent for the substantive *dharma-kāya*, sometimes occurs in Lokakṣema's translations at points where the Indic original is almost certain to have had *dharma-dhātu*.[80] This suggests that he regarded the two terms (viz., *dharma-dhātu* and *dharma-kāya* as a substantive) as interchangeable; for him both meant the totality of *dharmas*.[81] While this is of course in keeping with the Mainstream interpretation, and therefore supports our thesis, two things remain puzzling. The first is that Lokakṣema also used renditions of *dharma-dhātu* which do approximate the standard Chinese equivalent.[82] Why then was he not consistent? The second enigma is his insistence on employing the Chinese word *shen*, given that this never means "collection." Unable to replicate the ambiguity of the Sanskrit in Chinese, Lokakṣema was clearly faced with a difficult choice. That he opted for *shen* suggests that he regarded the primary meaning of the word *kāya* as more important, as somehow worth preserving, and could indicate that even by his time there were Buddhists who were already starting to regard the *dharma-kāya* as a "body" of some kind, even if only metaphorically. While these questions relating to Lokakṣema's stylistic preferences will only be clarified by the continuing examination of his translations, they do not, I believe, invalidate our general thesis, which is that the use

of the term *dharma-kāya* in this important body of early middle Mahāyāna *sūtras* is continuous with Mainstream interpretations.

## III. *Dharma-kāya* in other Māhāyana sources

There we might be content to let the matter rest, but before attempting to formulate some general conclusions it might be useful to look for corroborating evidence in Mahāyāna *sūtras* outside the Lokakṣema corpus, especially those often cited in discussions of the Trikāya theory.[83] Clearly there are limits to what we can undertake here, but one obvious candidate for re-appraisal is the *Vajracchedikā-prajñā-pāramitā-sūtra (Vaj)* and the well-known verses which run, according to Conze's (1974: 57) edition of the Sanskrit text (I have regularised the spelling):

> *ye māṃ rūpeṇa cādrākṣur ye māṃ ghoṣeṇa cānvayuḥ /*
> *mithyā-prahāṇa-prasṛtā na māṃ drakṣyanti te janāḥ //*
>
> *dharmato buddhā draṣṭavyā dharma-kāyā hi nāyakāḥ /*
> *dharmatā ca na vijñeyā na sā śakyā vijānituṃ //*

Once again, Conze's translations—for there are several in existence—are far from adequate. In one version (Conze 1973b: 136) we find the second verse rendered:

> From the Dharma should one see the Buddhas,
> From the Dharmabodies comes their guidance.
> Yet Dharma's true nature cannot be discerned,
> And no-one can be conscious of it as an object.

Here, too, we encounter errors in linguistic interpretation compounding philosophical incoherence. What on earth can it mean to say that the Buddhas are guided by the "Dharmabodies"? Conze has, of course, mistaken the subject for the predicate and *vice versa*, in the belief that *dharma-kāya* is a substantive. What the text says is that the Guides or Leaders *are dharma-kāya*, i.e., this word is once again functioning as an adjective. Even for the (6th century?) Gilgit version, recently re-edited by Schopen (see Gomez & Silk 1989: 89–139), where the words *hi nāyakāḥ* in the relevant line are replaced by *tathāgataḥ* (i.e., singular), the same interpretation is in my opinion the correct one.[84] However, Schopen, following Conze's example, translates *dharma-kāya* as a noun ("The Tathāgata is the body of Doctrine"), thus continuing a long tradition. The second verse makes much better sense if we translate it properly: "The Buddha is to be seen in terms of the *dharma*; the *Tathāgata* has the *dharma* for a body. The nature of *dharma(s)*, however, is indiscernible [to the senses]; it is not possible to discern it."[85]

What this means is that in the *Vaj* there is no use of the term *dharma-kāya* in

the nominal sense, although the term *rūpa-kāya* does occur, in a passage which may at first have directly preceded the above, but become separated from it in the course of time (see Conze 1973b: sections 20a, 26a). This is possibly a further indication of the age of the *Vaj*, in that no Trikāya-related notion of the *dharma-kāya* is found in it.[86] Both verses are apparently drawn from a Mainstream text, although Mainstream parallels have been found only for the first one.[87] The second verse, of greater interest to us here, has so far proved elusive. One notes, however, the similarity of the wording in the Gilgit version (viz., *dharma-kāyas tathāgataḥ*) with that of the passage from Chap. XXXI of the *AsPP* and the two verses from the *LAn* cited above, and the fact that the point being made by the *Vaj* here is precisely that which *KP* 125 is attempting to trump, as it were. That this second verse is missing from some recensions of the *Vaj*, such as the Central Asian MS[88] and the earliest Chinese translation by Kumārajīva (T.235, dated 402 C.E.), indicates that it has been inserted later in the history of the text, possibly under the influence of a different Perfection of Wisdom or other Mahāyāna *sūtra*.[89] In one sense, however, the date of its insertion is beside the point: even with it, the *Vaj* never goes beyond the Mainstream position.

Another text occasionally cited in connection with Trikāya theory is the *Samādhi-rāja-sūtra* (*SR*), in particular the 22nd chapter dealing explicitly with the bodies of the Buddha, which was edited and translated by Regamey (1938b). As Regamey remarks in his comments on the doctrinal standpoint of the text (pp. 23–25), its buddhology is akin to that of the Perfection of Wisdom *sūtras* in knowing only two bodies, the *rūpa-kāya* and the *dharma-kāya*. Its notion of the *rūpa-kāya* encompasses many features which are commonly assigned to the *saṃbhoga-kāya* (in this regard it resembles the *LAn*), but here we are more concerned with its description of the *dharma-kāya*. We find many statements with a familiar ring. For example, in Section 7 (Regamey 1938b: 81), we are told that the *Tathāgata* is not to be discerned on the basis of his physical body, because the Buddhas and Lords are distinguished or constituted by the *dharma-kāya*, not by the physical body (*na rūpakāyatas tathāgataḥ prajñātavyaḥ. tat kasya hetoḥ? dharma-kāya-prabhāvitāś ca buddhā bhagavanto na rūpa-kāya-prabhāvitāḥ*). This *dharma-kāya* is then described in fairly abstract terms in the prose (Sections 9–12) and verses (Sections 13–37) which follow. Although Regamey translates it consistently as "Absolute Body," there is no reason why we should not render it as "body of *dharmas*," except for Section 34, where the words *dharma-kāyo mahāvīro* ought to be rendered "The great hero has the *dharma* for a body" (i.e., *dharma-kāya* is a *bahuvrīhi*).

What then of the *Sad-dharma-puṇḍarīka-sūtra* (*SP*), which is said by Nagao (1991: 104) to be one of the Mahāyāna *sūtras* in which the two-body theory "became stabilized"?[90] In fact, there is only one occurrence of the term *dharma-kāya* in the entire Sanskrit text, in v. 82 near the end of Chap. 5 (Vaidya's edition, p. 96), which clearly has the sense of "body of *dharmas*," "totality of *dharmas*," "all *dharmas*."[91] The context places this beyond any doubt. Therefore, while it is

certainly true that the *SP* teaches a developed Mahāyāna buddhology, it does not explicitly invoke the concept of *dharma-kāya* to support it.[92]

Let us turn finally to the *Lāṅkāvatāra-sūtra* (*LA*), where we might reasonably expect to find traces of Yogācāra doctrines, given the well-known affinity of this text with that school. As Suzuki points out (1930: 316ff.), there are adumbrations of the Trikāya doctrine, but although "the idea of Dharmakāya is not wanting in the *Lāṅkāvatāra* . . . it is used not in the sense of the Dharmakāya of the Triple Body dogma." And yet Suzuki's own interpretation of the relevant passages is heavily influenced by Trikāya notions, or perhaps by Christian theology, and therefore the text needs to be re-interpreted in a number of places.

For example, at *LA* 30.7–8,[93] the words *tathāgato dharma-kāya-vaśavartī bhaviṣyati dharma-nairātmya-darśanāt* mean "he will become a *Tathāgata* who has mastery over the body/collection/ totality of *dharmas* through seeing the absence of self in *dharmas*."[94] Here *dharma-kāya* probably has the same sense it carries in the *SP* passage cited above. Suzuki's translation ("endowed with the perfect freedom of the Dharmakāya") is ambiguous, but could easily give one the impression that *dharma-kāya* possesses the quality of "perfect freedom," rather than being merely the object of *vaśavartin*. The same problem arises at *LA* 55.11–12, which reads: *punar api lokottarānāsrava-dhātu-paryāpannān saṃbhārān paripūrya acintya-dharma-kāya-vaśavartitāṃ pratilapsyante*. One could translate this roughly as "Further, having acquired all the requisites pertaining to the supramundane and incorruptible realm, they will obtain mastery over the body of inconceivable *dharmas*." Unaccountably, Suzuki (1932: 116) speaks of "the attainment of the Dharmakāya which is of sovereign power and beyond conception,"[95] but here *acintya*, which usually means "inconceivable in number or extent," is just as likely to qualify *dharma* as it is *kāya*, and *dharma-kāya* must again be the *object* of *vaśavartitā*, as in the preceding citation.[96] Other passages where *dharma-kāya* is best understood as the totality of *dharmas* are *LA* 10.11–12 (Chap. II, v. 4);[97] *LA* 20.12, where Mahāmati invites the Buddha to expound the *dharma-kāya*—surely the collection of *dharmas* understood as teachings—praised (*anugīta*) by the *Tathāgatas*;[98] *LA* 23.16, where as a result of the teachings of the *Tathāgatas* the *bodhisattvas* are said to obtain the *dharma-kāya*;[99] and *LA* 94.19, where the *dharma-kāya* of the *Tathāgatas* is said to be as indestructible as the sands of the Ganges.[100] While these passages could at a pinch be interpreted in terms of some kind of "cosmic body," "body of *dharmas*" is a perfectly adequate rendition in all cases, and a better one in most.

There are, however, a number of passages where buddhology seems to be the issue. At *LA* 58.11–14, for example, the bodily identity (*kāya-samatā*) of all *Tathāgatas* is explained in terms of the sameness of both the *dharma-kāya* and the *rūpa-lakṣaṇānuvyañjana-kāya*, except when *Tathāgatas* assume different forms to convert beings.[101] This passage is a definite echo of *LAn* v. 79 (see above), even though *dharma-kāya* is a substantive here; we noted the same idea in the *DKP*, the *Upāya-kauśalya-sūtra* and the *Kośa*.[102] As Suzuki points out (1930: 318), this passage certainly implies all three bodies, but *dharma-kāya*

here may still be interpreted along the lines already established. A more puzzling passage occurs at *LA* 78.6–8:

> *kiṃ tu mahāmate manomaya-dharma-kāyasya tathāgatasyaitad adhivacanaṃ yatra sarva-tīrthakara-śrāvaka-pratyekabuddha-sapta-bhūmi-pratiṣṭhitānāṃ ca bodhisattvānām aviṣayaḥ / so 'nutpādas tathāgatasya [/] etan mahāmate paryāya-vacanam.*

Although the faulty punctuation is easily remedied, the compound *manomaya-dharma-kāyasya* is potentially troublesome, given that there is such a thing as the *manomaya-kāya*. However, if we take it as a *bahuvrīhi* adjective qualifying *tathāgatasya*, the passage yields the following sense:

> "However, Mahāmati, there is a designation for the *Tathāgata*, insofar as he is embodied in the *dharma* which is mind-made [or better: in the *dharmas* which are mind-made], which is beyond the reach of any sectarians, *śrāvakas, pratyekabuddhas* or *bodhisattvas* on the [first] seven stages. It is 'non-production.' This, Mahāmati, is a synonym for the *Tathāgata*."[103]

That is to say, the term *manomaya-dharma-kāya* is probably to be explained as an allusion to the celebrated opening verses of the *Dhammapada*, which say that all *dharmas* are, among other things, *manomaya* or "mind-made."[104] Thus the designation *anutpāda*, "non-production," applies to the *Tathāgata* insofar as he is embodied in or identified with the *dharma* or *dharmas*, which are *manomaya* and therefore essentially "unproduced." Non-movement also follows from this, as we saw in the *AsPP*. Of course, the Buddha's physical body is a different matter, since it is corruptible; it is produced and destroyed, which is exactly the message of *LAn* v. 37 (see above).[105] Finally, we encounter the *bahuvrīhi* adjective again at *LA* 104.2–3, in the section prohibiting meat-eating, where we find the words *dharma-kāyā hi mahāmate tathāgatā dharmāhāra-sthitayo*, i.e., "for the *Tathāgatas* have the *dharma* as their body, they are dependent on the *dharma* for their food."[106] The phrase *dharma-kāyās tathāgatāḥ* is by now an old friend; the adjective *dharmāhāra-sthiti*[107] is reminiscent of another of the Āgama passages studied by Anesaki, *Ekottarāgama* XV (T.125, 623b7): *rulaishen-zhe yi fa wei shi*, "the *Tathāgata*'s body has the *dharma* as its food."[108]

We must conclude, then, that although the *LA* may well contain many allusions and references to the Yogācāra Trikāya theory, its use of the term *dharma-kāya* itself does not differ in any significant way from the other *sūtras* we have studied, a fact of which Suzuki himself was aware. Despite this, he was frequently seduced by a somewhat theistic interpretation of the Trikāya doctrine into misconstruing the relevant passages, so that his readers were left thinking that the *LA* did in fact teach such a thing as the "Dharmakāya which is of sovereign power and beyond conception."[109]

## IV. General conclusions

In the context of this paper I cannot survey the full range of *dharma-kāya* references in the scriptural and scholastic literature of the Mahāyāna, but I hope that I have covered enough major works to demonstrate that a case can be made for a different reading of the concept. At least as far as the early and middle Mahāyāna are concerned, there is little in the texts I have studied to suggest a departure from Mainstream interpretations. I see this paper, therefore, as yet another attempt at what I might call the abolition of imaginary discontinuities in Buddhist history. In this case what is done away with is the prevailing notion that the *dharma-kāya* is some kind of Buddhist "Godhead" or "Cosmic Body" invented by the followers of the Mahāyāna in the philosophical exuberance of their headlong rush towards theism. Pioneers in the field like Suzuki and Conze can be excused for falling under the spell of this idea, but, as we have seen, even recent writers on the subject of the Trikāya have continued to ignore such basics as Edgerton's observations concerning the use of *dharma-kāya* as an adjective in early and middle Mahāyāna *sūtras*, and have therefore obscured more than one important moment in the development of the concept. Too ready to assimilate all occurrences of the term to a particular understanding of the nominal *dharma-kāya* of the developed Trikāya theory, they have misconstrued many key passages, thereby collapsing what may have been centuries of gradual doctrinal development, into a single incoherent theoretical position. Further, this incoherency has become enshrined in the standard English translations of key Mahāyāna *sūtras*, to the extent that it now goes unchallenged by some of the leading lights of Buddhist studies. Nor is it merely that the adjective, even when recognized as such, has been misinterpreted as the noun; the noun has also been misinterpreted. Where *dharma-kāya* does appear as a substantive, to continue to translate it as "*Dharma*-body" or "Body of *Dharma*" may not seem a serious error, but when that term appears in conjunction with the other "bodies" of the Buddha, the temptation is to impute some kind of unitary ontological status to it, and to engage in theological flights of fancy which are unsupported by the texts. Thus metaphor gives way to metaphysics. That *kāya* means both "body" in the ordinary sense and "body" in the sense of collection obviously provided Buddhists of both Mainstream and Mahāyāna persuasions with an ambiguity which they found exceedingly useful and suggestive, but one presumes they were always in a position to construe the term *dharma-kāya* in a way which did not involve hypostatisation of a non-existent entity, however abstract, even when it occurred alongside other *kāya* terms which did relate to the material world. Reification of the nonexistent is a cardinal sin as far as Buddhists are concerned. We Buddhist scholars should avoid it too. Since the English expression "the body of *dharmas*" does not carry the same potential ontological freight as "the Body of *Dharma*" or "the *Dharma*-body," we could do worse than use it from now on, assuming, of course, that we are dealing with the substantive.

All this raises the question: is the "*Dharma*-body" understood as an actual

body of the Buddha purely a figment of the modern Buddhological imagination, or does it go back to the Yogācāras or some other followers of the Mahāyāna at a later point in its history? The study of the texts translated by Lokakṣema demonstrates that an actual "Buddha-body" called the *dharma-kāya* is not attested in the earlier versions, but we have also seen that even in their later forms many *sūtras* did not move very far (if at all) beyond a position which was also acceptable to at least some of the Mainstream schools, and were a long way from postulating the "cosmic body" or "absolute principle" which we have come almost automatically to identify with the *dharma-kāya*. For we must remember in this connection that the Tibetan and Sanskrit versions of the texts referred to in this study date for the most part from a relatively late period; if they show no trace of this idea, it can hardly have been common coin. Would it then be appropriate to suggest that the standard notion of *dharma-kāya* as a unitary cosmic principle was, in Indian Buddhism at least, exclusively a matter of Yogācāra scholastics, and not one of the staple Mahāyāna doctrines as is commonly supposed? At this point I arrive at the limits of my own competence, but in the light of my findings with respect to the *LA*, a text rich in Cittamātra elements, I am tempted to ask if even the Yogācāra discussions of the subject, as well as those writings influenced by them, may also need to be reconsidered. I hope therefore that others might be prompted by this paper to re-evaluate *dharma-kāya* passages in the later *sūtra* and *śāstra* literature, in order to see if less "reifying" interpretations make better sense of them, or are at least possible.[110]

Although my conclusions may well have wider application, they relate in the first instance to the Mainstream and early and middle Mahāyāna understanding of *dharma-kāya*. Let us be clear about the central issue here, since that may well have become obscured by the sheer mass of textual detail which this paper has thrown up. As far as the Buddhists who wrote the texts were concerned, what was important was the identification of the Buddha with the *dharma* or *dharmas*, of the Teacher with the truth which he taught or the principles which he realised, considered either in the abstract, or concretely embodied in scripture. A simple equation perhaps, but with far-reaching consequences, especially for Buddhist cult-practice, in which the cult of relics eventually coalesced with the cult of the book. In light of this we ourselves should always opt for an interpretation which emphasises the *dharma* of *dharma-kāya*, rather than the *kāya*, that is, the *dharma* or *dharmas* by which Buddhahood is truly constituted and in which it finds its expression, and not some ill-defined transcendental "body."[111]

I trust that this paper has in passing illustrated some of the benefits to be derived from a close study of the early Chinese translations.[112] Undoubtedly it illustrates the complexity of such an undertaking, since even the attempt to run a single technical term to ground has led us a merry chase, through and around scores of textual and philosophical difficulties, deep into the four-dimensional labyrinth of Mahāyāna *sūtra*-literature. We have seen, I hope, that careful linguistic analysis is our equivalent of Ariadne's thread, enabling us to keep our bearings as we move slowly—if not always surely!—towards the clarification of

the issues central to our concern. It is not enough to count the occurrences of this or that term in this or that translation: each and every occurrence has to be weighed in the balance, considered in its context. Of course, it is stating the obvious to say that the study of Buddhist ideas should always proceed like this, carefully and on the basis of sound philology, but let us not be too quick to pass judgement on those who in preceding us have lost their way. At this point the labyrinth harboured something particularly deceptive, in a way which is not unusual. It is common knowledge that Buddhist texts, scriptures and treatises alike, often use puns, double meanings, plays on words and fanciful etymologies to get their message across, and that this poses exceptional difficulties for translators and commentators. The beast in this instance not only had the power to appear in two grammatical forms, but those forms were also cloaked in multiple ambiguities. Even when cornered, it continued to resist its interpreters. In the ensuing struggle the ambiguities and the twin forms perished. Worse still, from their mangled remains arose a ghostly entity which continues to haunt us, insubstantial but yet substantivised (and provided with imposing capitals to boot), the cosmic or absolute *Dharma*-Body of the Buddha—a "body" which is more of a phantom than any of the apparitions ever conjured up by the *Tathāgatas* out of compassion for suffering sentient beings.[113]

## Notes

1 A preliminary version of this paper was presented at Berkeley and at the 10th Congress of the International Association of Buddhist Studies in Paris in July, 1991. I wish to thank all those friends and colleagues who either heard or read this first draft and made helpful comments on it, in particular Rolf Giebel, Richard Gombrich, Kevin Lee, Jan Nattier, David Seyfort Ruegg, Lambert Schmithausen, Gregory Schopen and Jonathan Silk.

2 See, e.g., Murti 1955: 284–287.

3 See, e.g., Reynolds and Hallisey 1987: 330–331.

4 See, e.g., Murti 1955: 285: "The Dharmakāya is still a Person, and innumerable merits and powers etc. are ascribed to him."

5 See Suzuki 1930: 308–338. Suzuki's discussion of the whole subject has a distinctly "theological" flavour (see especially pp. 308, 310), to which we shall return later.

6 For example, sometimes the *dharma-kāya* is also referred to as the *svābhāvikakāya* or "essential body," sometimes this latter is said to constitute a fourth body. The dispute over this issue is the focus of the article by John Makransky (1989).

7 This article was reprinted with inconsequential changes in Nagao 1991: 103–122. All citations are from this later version.

8 Presumably Nagao means Mainstream Buddhist scriptures here. "Mainstream Buddhism" is the term I employ to refer to non-Mahāyāna Buddhism, in preference to the other terms in current use, none of which is totally satisfactory. "Theravāda" is patently inaccurate and anachronistic, "Hīnayāna" is pejorative and potentially offensive, "Śrāvakayāna" is more subtly pejorative, and also makes it hard to place the Pratyeka-buddhayāna (whatever that was), while "Nikāya" or "Sectarian Buddhism," although neutral, are historically misleading, given the fact that the Mahāyāna was a pan-Buddhist movement running across Nikāya or Vinaya school/ordination lineage boundaries. This means that monks and nuns converted to

the Mahāyāna continued to belong also to the Nikāya in which they had been ordained, to uphold its Vinaya, and so on. However, they remained in the minority, at least in India. The term "Mainstream" reflects this situation.

9 See above, n. 8.

10 Other valuable recent contributions are by Kajiyama (1984/1989) and Williams (1989: 167–184). The lengthy discussion by Dutt (1977: 141–177) cannot be recommended. For an excellent survey of earlier scholarly work on this question and of the Buddhist sources themselves, see de La Vallée Poussin 1929: 762–813.

11 See Lancaster 1968: 92; see also de La Vallée Poussin 1929: 764.

12 For a short survey of these texts see Harrison 1987 and forthcoming.

13 Although a detailed treatment can be found only in Lancaster's unpublished doctoral dissertation (1968), indications of some of his findings appear in Lancaster 1974 & 1975.

14 A sixth passage containing the term *dharma-śarīra* (in Chap, III; see Vaidya 1960: 29 and Conze 1975: 105–106) was also studied in Lancaster's dissertation, but was not considered in his published work. Although it seems to have nothing to do with Trikāya theory, it is in certain respects relevant to our subject, as we shall see.

15 References to the Sanskrit are to Vaidya's text, on account of its general availability.

16 A similar rendering of *dharma-kāya* as a noun is also found in Kajiyama's Japanese translation of the *AsPP* (Kajiyama 1974: I, 128).

17 Makransky's rendering (p.66) agrees substantially with Conze's, as does that of Dutt (1977: 175).

18 The same point was made by S. Bagchi in the "Glossary and Critical Notes" appended to Vaidya's edition of the *AsPP* (p. 576).

19 *Bahuvrīhis* are exocentric possessive compounds. Although their final member is a substantive, they function primarily as adjectives, qualifying other substantives. A *bahuvrīhi* of the form "XY" may be often be translated as "having a Y which is X." Analogues in English are expressions like "two-car family" and "wide-body jet."

20 The four terms mean "having the *dhamma* for a body," "having *brahman* for a body," "become *dhamma*," "become *brahman*." Cf.T.W. & C.A.F. Rhys Davids 1921: IV, 81; de La Vallée Poussin 1929: 765; Lamotte 1958: 689; and Takasaki 1987: 64. The translation by de La Vallée Poussin (accepted by Lamotte) seems to me the most accurate: "les Bouddhas ont pour corps le Dharma, le Brahman, sont le Dharma, sont le Brahman" (see also Lamotte 1988: 622). Similarly, the listing for *dhamma-kāya* in this passage in the *Pali Tipiṭaka Concordance*, s.v., is: "having dh. as body." However, the translation by Demiéville (1930: 176) misleadingly renders *dhamma-kāya* and *brahma-kāya* as substantives, as does the recent translation by Walshe (1987: 409). Reynolds (1977: 379) follows the same tendency, and even Mus, in his lengthy ruminations on this passage (1978: 624–625, 712–717), constantly substantivises the term. These writers, one assumes, have been unduly influenced by Trikāya formulations. The worst offender is Mus, who, largely on the basis of this passage, discerns in the Pāli canon "une doctrine ésotérique du dhammakāya: le Corps du Buddha est fait de la substance transcendante du dharma, et les Saints ont part à cette substance" (1978: 761).

21 Throughout this study I refrain from capitalising the Sanskrit word *dharma* (Pāli: *dhamma*), since doing so restricts its possible range of meanings. In Sanskrit, which has no capitals in any case, the word is often ambiguous, and this ambiguity ought to be preserved in English.

22 I take *dhamma-kāya* to be that kind of *bahuvrīhi* composed of two nouns and termed "appositional possessive" by Whitney (1962: 506), where the form "XY" may be translated "having a Y which is X" or "having X for Y." I can think of no exact analogue in English, but an ersatz example like "snake-hair(ed) woman" as a

description of Medusa illustrates how such compounds work; i.e., they can be literal as well as metaphorical in meaning.

23 There is no equivalent of *dhamma-kāya* in the Chinese translations of the corresponding text in the *Dīrghāgama*; see Demiéville 1930: 176. The pair *dhamma-bhūta, brahma-bhūta* also occurs at M iii 195.

24 See also *Itivuttaka* 91 and *Milinda-pañha* 71 (translated in T.W. Rhys Davids 1890: 110; Horner 1965: 96–97; see also below) for similar statements.

25 See, e.g., the *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta* (D ii 154). Cf. S i 71, where Gautama observes that although the body succumbs to aging, the *dhamma* of the good does not (*sataṃ ca dhammo na jaraṃ upeti*).

26 See, e.g., the equation of the two terms by Dhammapāla, cited in Mus 1978: 707.

27 I shall return to the remainder of this passage below. Let us note in passing, however, the crucial ambiguities embedded in this passage. Just as the word *śarīra* refers both to the living body and to the physical remains or relics of that body in which its life-force is believed to inhere, so too does "*dharma*" here refer to the law or truth in itself and to the physical objects in which it is concretised, i.e., the written copies of the scriptures. Much depends on this equation of the text with the truth (and thus the power) which it conveys.

28 Note that the correct interpretation of these three passages in the *AsPP* is also given by Dantinne (1983: 175), who, however, still cites them as evidence for a conception of *the dharma-kāya*.

29 I adopt the translation "body of *dharma(s)*" to avoid prejudicing the issue, for reasons which will become clear shortly.

30 The original work appeared in 1901; I have used the 1982 reprint of the revised version which appeared in the *Collected Works* in 1956.

31 The complete translation of the *Saṃyuktāgama* (T.99) was done by Guṇabhadra 435–443 C. E.

32 The translation (T.125) was made by Gautama Sanghadeva during the Eastern Jin Period (317–420). For recent studies on the school affiliation of the Āgama literature see Bechert 1985.

33 See T.99, XXIII, 168b16. Cf. Anesaki 1982: 155, especially his citation of the parallel passage in *Divyāvadāna* XXVII (pp. 396–397), the first two lines of which run: *yat taccharīraṃ vadatāṃ varasya dharmātmano dharma-mayaṃ viśuddham* (also quoted in de La Vallée Poussin 1929: 766). A further reference in T.99, XXIV, 171c14–16, to the *mingjuwei-shen*, the "body of words, phrases and syllables," is relevant to our subject too: "The teachings of the *Tathāgata* are immeasurable and limitless; the body of words, phrases and syllables is also immeasurable and endless." This reflects the Sanskrit terms *nāma-*, *vyañjana-*, and *pada-kāya* (cf. *BHSD*, s.v. *kāya*); the peculiar use of the character *wei* (literally, "flavour") to translate *vyañjana* presumably relates to its other meaning of "sauce" or "condiment." For the sense of *kāya* here, see below.

34 I am indebted to Gregory Schopen for bringing this reference to my attention. The school affiliation of the text is undetermined.

35 I refer here to such statements as "The *dharma* taught by the Lord is the body of the Lord" (p. 157: *ya eṣa dharmo Bhagavatā deśitaḥ etad Bhagavataḥ śarīraṃ*) and "The *dharma* is the body of the Lord" (p. 160: *dharma eva* [or *dharmaś ca*] *Bhagavataḥ śarīram*), together with the frequent use of the noun compound *dharma-śarīra* (at one point—p. 157—described as *Bhagavataḥ śarīram pāramārthikam*, cf. the *AsPP* passage cited above). *Bahuvrīhis* also crop up in the expressions *dharma-śarīras tathāgata* (p. 158) and *dharmakāyāḥ tathāgatāḥ* (pp. 158–159), which have the same meaning we saw above: "The *Tathāgata(s)* is/are *dharma*-bodied." It is to be noted that *dharma-kāya* as a substantive does not make an appearance. Further,

although there are many quotations of Mainstream scriptures, almost all of the above-cited material appears in the commentary appended to them by the author. By my reckoning there is one citation from the *Bodhimūla-sūtra* which contains the phrase *dharmaś ca Bhagavataḥ śarīram*. A parallel text is found in the Vinaya of the Mūlasarvāstivādins; see Lévi 1932: 160, n.2 and T.1451, 224c–225c.

36 On the ambiguity of the word *śarīra* (living body, dead body, physical remains, relic) see above, n. 27.

37 See above, n. 33.

38 See Trenckner's edition (1986: 73): *dhamma-kāyena pana kho mahārāja sakkā bhagavā nidassetuṃ, dhammo hi mahārāja bhagavatā desito*. On this passage, see also Mus 1978: 708–709; and Horner's own comments (1965: xl-xli).

39 Trenckner 1986: 71: yo *dhammaṃ passati so bhagavantaṃ passati, dhammo hi . . . bhagavatā desito*.

40 Contra Edgerton (*BHSD*, s.v. *dharma-kāya*), in his discussion of the parallel to this Vinaya passage in the *Divyāvadāna*. Note that this parallel has the words *upādhyāyānubhāvena*, whereas according to Dutt the Gilgit MS omits the word *anubhāvena*.

41 For further evidence for a Theravādin understanding of the *dhamma-kāya* as "body of the teachings," see Reynolds 1977: 376–377.

42 See de La Vallée Poussin 1929: 766–768, Makransky 1989: 51–52, and Williams 1989: 170–171 for a discussion of this Sarvāstivādin usage.

43 Note that this Sarvāstivādin list does not tally with Mahāyāna enumerations of the 18 exclusive Buddha-*dharmas*. See *Traité*, III, pp. 1625–1703, and, for one Mahāyāna example, Harrison 1990: 169–171.

44 Cf. the understanding of the *dharma-kāya* as consisting of the ten powers, four assurances, four special types of knowledge (*pratisaṃvid*), the 18 exclusive qualities (here a separate category), and other qualities, as attested by the *Dazhidu-lun* attributed to Nāgārjuna (T.1509, 274a); see *Traité*, IV, pp. 1913–1914, and de La Vallée Poussin 1929: 783–784. This notion is also echoed in Candrakīrti's *Tri-śaraṇa-saptati*, pp. 10–11 (see Sorensen 1986: 20–21; I am indebted to Peter Skilling for this reference).

45 See Reynolds 1977:380.

46 On the various meanings of the word *kāya*, see Makransky 1989: 63, n.2, and *BHSD*, s.v.

47 See T.1510, 584b. Cf. also *Ratna-gotra-vibhāga*, v.I.145, which distinguishes two aspects of *dharma-kāya*, one being the utterly pure *dharma-dhātu* and the other being its "outflow" (*niṣyanda*), the teaching; or, in other words, *dharma* as realisation (*adhigama-dharma*) and *dharma* as teaching (*deśanā-dharma*); see Takasaki 1966a: 182, 284–285; Ruegg 1969: 275.

48 The alternative is to construe *dharma-kāya* as a *karmadhāraya* with the first term being a noun used appositionally or in an adjectival sense, but this is totally unsuited to the Sarvāstivādin scholastic context. In effect I am proposing a single interpretation which will fit all contexts, viz., as a *tatpuruṣa*, the case relationship being genitive plural, as in the compounds *deva-senā* or *mūrkha-śatāni* (cf. Whitney 1962: 489–490). Of course, the compound *dharma-śarīra* cannot be understood like this; it is a *karmadhāraya*, with an appositional relationship between the two terms (i.e. "the body/relic which consists in the *dharma(s)*"), and is thus different in meaning. This is presumably why, when the author of the *Karmavibhaṅgopadeśa* wants to talk about this type of "body" or "relic," he uses only *dharma-śarīra*, and avoids the substantive *dharma-kāya*, even though he is quite prepared to use both terms interchangeably as *bahuvrīhis*.

49 I assume that the scriptural quotation ends at this point, as is indicated by the

Tibetan version. I have consulted only the Derge edition, Sher phyin Brgyad stong section, Volume Ka; see folio 53b1–2.

50 On the various ways of interpreting *prabhāvita*, see Conze 1974: 98–99; Conze 1973a:284; *BHSD*, s.v. *dharma-kāya*; and especially the lucid discussion by Schmithausen (1969: 109–111). The word's nuances include "produced," "manifested," "recognised," "characterised," and "distinguished"; Schmithausen proposes the rendering "constituted by" (*konstituiert durch*) in order to cover most of these senses. See also Ruegg 1969: 347–351 and Takasaki 1966a: 290, 314, & 355 for further examples of the use of *prabhāvita*.

51 Cf. Conze's translation (p. 118), which is in error in various respects, as has been pointed out by de Jong (1979: 375). This is possibly an echo of the *Saṃyuktāgama* passage concerning Ānanda quoted above.

52 See, e.g., Lancaster 1968: 93–94, 1975: 36, and Kajiyama 1984: 14.

53 Cf. Kajiyama 1974: II, 286. The Tibetan text (Derge Ka 249b3) suggests that *pramāṇīkṛiya* is to be taken as a gerundive.

54 It is worth noting that not one of the *dharma-kāya* citations in question is represented in the text of the *Ratna-guṇa-saṃcaya-gāthā*, the so-called verse summary of the *AsPP*; see Yuyama 1976.

55 For an introduction to this text, see Harrison 1982. A full study of the *LAn* in its two extant versions is in preparation.

56 The verb *sprul pa* (= Skt. *nir-mā-*) is, however, found twice, once in v. 54 (*sku lus sprul pa mdzad pa ni*), and once in v. 89 (*sku lus dag ni sprul mdzad pa*). In the first case *nirmāṇa-kāya* could underlie the Tibetan.

57 I take David Seyfort Ruegg's point (personal communication, July, 1991) that one cannot be absolutely sure that the Tibetans have construed *bahuvrīhis* here. Indeed, classical Tibetan lacks the grammatical resources to make a clear distinction between a *bahuvrīhi* and a *tatpuruṣa*, unless it separates the two terms of the compound, which it appears to be reluctant to do. If the two terms are kept together there is no way of marking the difference, since even locutions like *chos (kyi) sku can* or *chos (kyi) sku dang ldan pa* might render an expression containing *dharma-kāya* as a noun, such as *dharma-kāya-saṃpanna* (unattested in Sanskrit as far as I am aware). Hence, while *bahuvrīhis* may be indicated by the use of particles like *can* (cf. Ruegg 1969: 510), they may also be indicated simply by the predicate *position*, and perhaps by the refusal to translate the plural. This can be seen in the Tibetan text for the *dharma-kāya* passages of the *AsPP* discussed above, those in which the Sanskrit clearly has a *bahuvrīhi* (the Tibetan is taken from the Derge edition, Sher phyin Brgyad stong section, Volume Ka). In Chap. IV, Skt. *dharma-kāya buddhā bhagavantaḥ* = Tib. *sangs rgyas bcom ldan 'das mams ni chos kyi sku yin* (53b1), in Chap. XVII, Skt. *dharma-kāyā buddhā bhagavanta* = Tib. *sangs rgyas bcom ldan 'das mams chos kyi sku'o* (187a6), and in Chap. XXXI, Skt. *dharma-kāyās tathāgatāḥ* = Tib. *de bzhin gshegs pa ni chos kyi sku'o* (277b2).

58 Variant reading in the Tshal pa Kanjurs: *rab ldan pas for ldan pas na*.

59 Lokakṣema uses a number of words to translate Skt. *dharma*; see Harrison 1990: 241. In order to reflect what I take to be his attempt to convey the polyvalency of the term, I adopt the strict rule of rendering his *jing* as "scripture," *fa* as "*dharma*."

60 To say that the Buddhas are the same insofar as they are embodied in the *dharma*, which is always the same, is somewhat different from saying that they are the same because they all possess the same *dharma-kāya*, or body of pure qualities, etc., but there is definitely a connection between the two. The *dharma* as a whole is the same, the ensemble of *dharmas* which constitute it is the same. The second idea appears in the *Abhidharma-kośa-bhāṣya*, Chap. VII, v. 34 (Pradhan 1975: 415):

*saṃbhāra-dharma-kāyābhyāṃ jagataś cārtha-caryayā /*
*samatā sarva-buddhānāṃ nāyur-jāti-pramāṇataḥ //*

See also the translation of this verse and the following discussion in de La Vallée Poussin 1971: V, 79ff., and the English translation by Pruden (1990: IV, 1145ff.). Cf. also Mus 1978: 627–628.

61 Here I cannot resist underlining the fact that, even though the early Chinese translations are often dismissed as too crude and imprecise to be of much use to us, in this case Lokakṣema has handled a crucial phrase with far greater precision and accuracy than many of his twentieth-century counterparts have contrived to do, with all the resources at their disposal.

62 Cf. *TSD*, where the equivalent *mag gi lus* is given for *pūti-kāya*.

63 See Harrison 1990: 22, n. 42 for the Chinese versions. In the light of the present article this passage in the *PraS* ought to be retranslated, with "Body of *Dharma*" replaced by "body of *dharmas*."

64 Cf. de La Vallée Poussin 1929: 708: "Plusieurs textes . . . disent que ce corps est commun à tous les Tathāgatas, pénètre tous les Dharmas, est semblable à l'espace, sans marques (*animitta*), sans causes (*asaṃskṛta*); qu'il n'est pas Rūpa ou Citta." Cf. also Mus 1978: 686.

65 See *KP*, Section 125. Cf. Tib.: *de de bzhin gshegs pa la chos nyid du yang mi lta na / gzugs kyi skur lta ci smos*.

66 A critical edition of the Tibetan translation of this text is in progress. The chapter and section divisions cited refer to this edition, to be published by the International Institute for Buddhist Studies, Tokyo, in 1992.

67 T.625 also indicates that the original had *sattva-dhātu* rather than the *nāna-dhātu* suggested by the Tibetan.

68 The term *fa-shen* occurs again in Lokakṣema's version of 2M (350c16), at a point where Tib. has only *chos*. Although his version of the latter half of the passage is rather obscure, neither Tib. nor T.625 suggests *dharma-kāya* here.

69 Note that the Song, Yuan and Ming editions read *jingfa* (i.e., scripture-dharmas) for *fa-shen*. This may well represent the original wording of Lokakṣema's text.

70 T.313 is here accepted as a translation by Lokakṣema or members of his school, which may subsequently have been partially revised, with the result that it now possesses various stylistic features which are not characteristic of Lokakṣema. Given that the same thing has happened to a number of Lokakṣema's works (most notably the *Banzhou sanmei jing*), I now see no reason to reject the traditional attribution entirely. Cf. Harrison 1990: 275, n. 43.

71 However, the *WWP*, a *sūtra* for which only the version ascribed to Lokakṣema is extant, does contain some interesting episodes where several brahmans who were previously unaware of the superiority of the Buddhist path report the decisive experience of seeing the Buddha with a body endowed with the 32 marks and the minor characteristics (see, e.g., 438a26 et seq.). This suggests that the vision of what we now think of as the *saṃbhoga-kāya* was not restricted to advanced *bodhisattvas*, at least as far as some Buddhists were concerned.

72 See Dantinne 1983: 120.

73 The Tib. text (Derge ed., Dkon brtsegs Kha 18b7–19a2) reads: *sha ra dwa ti'i bu yang bcom ldan 'das de bzhin gshegs pa dgra bcom pa yang dag par rdzogs pa'i sangs rgyas mi 'khrugs pa de sngon byang chub sems dpa'i spyad pa spyod pa na chos ston pa 'am chos nyan pa'i tshe / lan dga'* [read *'ga'*] *yang de'i lus ngal ba 'am sems ngal bar gyur pa med de / de ci'i phyir zhe na / sha ra dwa ti'i bu 'di ltar de bzhin gshegs pa des dang po sems bskyed pa nas bzung ste / byang chub sems dpa'i spyad pa spyod pa na chos kyi sku rab tu bsgoms par gyur pa'i phyir ro // sha ra dwa ti'i bu yang bcom ldan 'das de bzhin gshegs pa dgra bcom pa yang dag par*

*rdzogs pa'i sangs rgyas mi 'khrugs pa de sngon byang chub sems dpa'i spyad pa spyod cing chos nyan pa na 'di snyam du sems te ji ltar bdag da ltar chos 'dod pa de bzhin du bdag bla na med pa yang dag par rdzogs pa'i byang chub mngon par rdzogs par sangs rgyas pa'i sangs rgyas kyi zhing de na sems can mams kyang chos mi 'dod par mi 'gyur zhing chos 'dod par gyur cig snyam mo //.*

74 This passage is part of a long section of the text (one of many) omitted in the translation of T.310, No. 6 by Garma C. C. Chang *et al.* (Chang 1983: 320).

75 For proof that this corruption is possible, see *BHSD*, s.v. Dharmakāma, and Regamey 1938b: 58, n. 11.

76 Cf. Dantinne 1983: 3–4, 38–39. Dantinne postulates two separate recensions of the text, one represented by T.313 and the Tib., the other by T.310.

77 *Prabhāvita* meaning "distinguished by," etc. See above, n. 50. Presumably this word was construed somewhat differently by Bodhiruci.

78 This corruption may well have been influenced by the phrase *dharma-kāya-prabhāvita* which occurs, e.g., in Chap. 22 of the *SR* (this passage is discussed below). It also occurs in the *Tathāgata-guhya-sūtra*, as quoted in the *Śikṣā* (Vaidya 1961: 89), where the *bodhisattva* is said to be *dharma-kāya-prabhāvita*, i.e., "distinguished by [their possession of] the body of *dharmas*." It seems highly unlikely that this is the same body which suffering beings see, hear and touch to such good effect, although Bendall and Rouse's translation of the passage would have it so (1971: 157–158). Cf. also Conze 1974: 99. On *prabhāvita*, see above, n. 50.

79 Note that this interpretation of the passage clashes with Dantinne's Sanskrit "reconstructions" and, indeed, his division of the text into two separate sections. However, I am in agreement with Dantinne's translation of *dharma-kāya* as "l'ensemble des qualités." See also his lengthy note on the term (pp. 175–180), which provides a number of useful references to passages concerning *dharma-kāya*, which he also translates as "corps de qualités."

80 Examples found so far only in the *DKP* and the *AjKV*. A close re-reading of Lokakṣema's other works may turn up further instances.

81 This is, of course, a perfectly acceptable equation; see, e.g., Takasaki 1966b, Ruegg 1969: 275, King 1991: 13, and above, n. 47. A similar instance of interchangeability in translation is found in the *Upāya-kauśalya-sūtra*, in a passage which echoes a number of themes we have already raised. If we go by the Tibetan text translated from Indic (see Derge, Dkon brtsegs Cha 32a2–6), this passage says that *bodhisattvas* skilled in the use of creative stratagems (*upāya-kuśala*) who worship one Buddha know that by doing so they worship them all, through reflecting that "the Buddhas and Lords have arisen from one and the same *dharma-dhātu*, and have one and the same morality, *samādhi*, wisdom, liberation, knowledge and vision of liberation, cognition and understanding (Tib. *sangs rgyas bcom ldan 'das mams ni chos kyi dbyings gcig las nges par byung ba dang / tshul khrims gcig pa dang / ting nge 'dzin gcig pa dang / shes rab gcig pa dang / rnam par grol ba gcig pa dang / mam par grol ba'i ye shes mthong ba gcig pa dang / ye shes gcig pa dang / rig pa gcig pa yin no*)." The earliest Chinese translation, that of Dharmarakṣa (T.345, 156b20f.), states that the Buddhas are equal in their *dharma-kāya* (*fa-shen*); the second, of Zhu Nanti (T.310, No. 38, 595a18f.) states that "all *Tathāgatas* share one and the same *dharma-dhātu* and *dharma-kāya* (*yiqie rulai tong yi fajie yi fashen*)"; while the latest version by Dānapāla (T.346, 166b20) says only that they share one and the same *dharma-dhātu* (*fa-xing*). In the words which follow, the two older versions also list only the five *anāsrava-skandhas*, which, as we have already noted, comprise a classic Mainstream definition of *dharma-kāya*.

82 See, e.g., his version of the *LAn* (T.807), where *jingfa-benjie* (753b2, 15) and *jing-benjie* (753b18) correspond to *chos kyi dbyings* in the Tib. version (vv. 87, 93 & 94).

83 Here we transgress against one of the basic methodological principles of the "Lokakṣema Project," viz., to consider only those scriptures known to have been used in a certain place at a certain time, but it is to be hoped that the results achieved will make up for any departure from methodological purity.

84 The Gilgit text reads:

> *ye māṃ rūpeṇa adrākṣur ye māṃ ghoṣeṇa anvayuḥ /*
> *mithyā-prahāṇa-prasṛtā na māṃ drakṣyanti te janāḥ /*
> *draṣṭavyo dharmato buddho dharma-kāyas tathāgataḥ /*
> *dharmatā cāpy avijñeyā na sā śakyaṃ vijānituṃ //*

85 Dantinne also provides a correct interpretation (1983: 176), as does Nagao (1973b: 62); see also Takasaki (1987: 66). I take *avijñeya* here to mean "not able to be made the object of sensory consciousness (*vijñāna*)."

86 Cf. Schopen 1975: 153.

87 A partial parallel in *Thera-gāthā* 469; see Conze 1974: 57.

88 This is the Sanskrit MS of the *Vaj*, dated to around the end of 5th century, edited by Pargiter in Hoernle 1916: 176–195 (see especially p. 192).

89 The second verse is to be found in all the later Chinese translations of the *Vaj*, beginning with Bodhiruci's version of 509 (T.236, 756b & 761b). An equivalent also appears in the Khotanese version edited by Sten Konow in Hoernle 1916: 214–288; the verses appear on pp. 270–271; note also the English translation on p. 286: "The Exalted Ones should be viewed as being the Law; their body consists of the Law; he is rightly understood as being the Law, and he is not to be understood by means of expedients." It is to be observed that the relevant passage in Chap. XXXI of the *AsPP* makes its first appearance in Chinese in Kumārajīva's translation, i.e., early 5th century.

90 See also Reynolds & Hallisey 1987: 331: "According to such texts as the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, the *dharma-kāya* is the true meaning of Buddhahood." While not exactly wrong, this statement is quite misleading in its context.

91 Cf. *BHSD*, s.v. *kāya*.

92 Cf. Mus 1978: 678–703. Although he identifies its magnificent central figure as a kind of *saṃbhoga-kāya*, Mus contends at length that the entire buddhology of the *SP* rests ultimately on a notion of *dharma-kāya*—the relevant chapter of his book is even entitled "Le Dharmakāya du *Lotus de la Bonne Loi*"—without ever drawing attention to the virtual non-occurrence of the term in the text! The relationship of the buddhology of the *SP* to *dharma-kāya* is also considered at length in Lai 1981.

93 References are to Vaidya's edition, 1963.

94 Cf. Suzuki 1930: 317 and 1932: 62: "become a Tathagata endowed with the perfect freedom of the Dharmakāya, because of his insight into the egolessness of things."

95 In full Suzuki's translation reads: "Now being taken into a super-world which is the realm of no-evil-outflows, they will gather up all the material for the attainment of the Dharmakāya which is of severeign [*sic*] power and beyond conception." It is small wonder that the *LA* is thought to be so confused, if this is all non-Sanskritists have to go on.

96 Note the matching verse at the end of the chapter (55.29) which says *te buddha-dharmākhyaṃ kāyaṃ prāpsyanti māmakam*, "they will attain the body of mine which is known as the Buddha-*dharmas*."

97 Cf. Suzuki 1932: 22, and *BHSD*, s.v. *kāya*. *A* possible alternative interpretation would be to take *dharma-kāya* as a noun based on a *bahuvrīhi*: "How can one praise him who has the nature of an illusion or a dream, who has the *dharma* for a body?"

98 Cf. Suzuki 1932: 40.

99 The Sanskrit reads: *sarva-śrāvaka-pratyekabuddha-tīrthakara-dhyāna-samādhi-samāpatti-sukham atikramya tathāgatācintya-viṣaya-pracāra-gati-pracāraṃ pañca-dharma-svabhāva-gati-vinivṛttaṃ tathāgataṃ* [?] *dharma-kāyaṃ prajñā-jñāna-sunibaddha-dharmaṃ māyā-viṣayābhinivṛttaṃ sarva-buddha-kṣetra-tuṣita-bhavanākaniṣṭhālayopagaṃ tathāgata-kāyaṃ pratilabheran*. This is without doubt an extremely difficult passage; cf. Suzuki 1932: 46.

100 Cf. Suzuki 1930: 318–319 & 1932: 200. Note the following comments about the *dharma* being bodiless (94.25–27). This is rather reminiscent of the Āgama passages cited above.

101 Skt.: *tatra katamā kāya-samatā? yaduta ahaṃ ca te ca tathāgatā arhantaḥ samyak-saṃbuddhā dharma-kāyena ca rūpa-lakṣaṇānuvyañjana-kāyena ca samā nirviśiṣṭā anyatra vaineya-vaśam upādāya / tatra tatra sattva-gati-viśeṣeṇa tathāgatā rūpa-vaicit-ryam ādarśayanti*. Cf. Suzuki 1932: 123.

102 See above. ns. 60 & 81.

103 Cf. Suzuki 1930: 318 & 1932: 165: "... there is another name for the Tathāgata when his Dharmakāya assumes a will-body. This is what goes beyond the comprehension of the philosophers, Śrāvakas, Pratyekabuddhas, and those Bodhisattvas still abiding in the seventh stage. The unborn, Mahāmati, is synonymous with the Tathāgata."

104 See Carter & Palihawadana 1987: 89–94. My thanks to Richard Gombrich (personal communication, 30/7/91) for suggesting this interpretation.

105 Cf. also de La Vallée Poussin 1929: 704, quoting *Madhyamakāvatāra*, p. 361.

106 Cf. Suzuki 1932: 219: "The Tathāgata is the Dharmakāya, Mahāmati: he abides in the Dharma as food."

107 Cf. Pāli *āhāra-ṭhitika* (*PTSD*, s. v. *āhāra, ṭhitika*).

108 Cf. Anesaki 1982: 155 (with several similar citations in the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*); also quoted in Demiéville 1930: 177: "Le Corps du Tg. a pour nourriture la Loi." Note the use of the *yi* ... *wei* ... construction to render the *bahuvrīhi*.

109 In fact the buddhology of the *LA* is so chaotic and complex that a full study of it would be a truly Herculean task. For the purposes of this paper it is enough to show that its use of *dharma-kāya*, both as an adjective and a noun, can be satisfactorily interpreted along traditional lines.

110 Sallie King's recent book on the "Buddha Nature" is a good example of the "non-reifying" approach, applied *inter alia* to *dharma-kāya* (see King 1991: 65–68, 101ff.).

111 It should be noted that even if my attempt to apply a single grammatical interpretation to the substantive *dharma-kāya* is rejected, and it is read in some contexts as a *karmadhāraya* like *dharma-śarīra*, viz., as "the body which is the *dharma*," a "non-reifying" approach emphasizing *dharma* can still be defended.

112 On this see, e.g., Lancaster 1977.

113 As David Seyfort Ruegg has pointed out (personal communication, July, 1991), the evolution of the *tathāgata-garbha* concept also poses problems which are in some respects similar to those outlined above. In both cases semantic and grammatical difficulties compound the philosophical complexity of the issues involved. On this and on the use of *tathāgata-garbha* and related terms as *bahuvrīhis* see Ruegg 1969: 499–516. It may well be, as Ruegg suggests (p. 512), that the occurrence of the term as a *bahuvrīhi* is historically prior to its appearance as a *tatpuruṣa*. This raises the possibility that in the case of *tathāgata-garbha*, too, we are faced with many different textual strata, deposited over time by the gradual process of hypostatisation (of something that began life as pure metaphor), but now hopelessly jumbled in heterogeneous sources whose dates we can only guess at. Once again, the matter is further complicated by the ambiguity of the word *garbha*, which means both "womb" and

"embryo." Hence, for example, the statement in the *Tathāgata-garbha-sūtra* to the effect *sarva-sattvās tathāgata-garbhāḥ* (cited Ruegg 1969: 510; see also Takasaki 1966a: 196) may be understood as "all sentient beings are *Tathāgata*-wombs" (i.e., contain the *Tathāgata*, a common use of *garbha in fine compositi*), or as "all sentient beings have the *Tathāgata* as embryo." While these two senses are much the same, and may be read purely as a figure of speech—inside every unenlightened sentient being is a Buddha trying to get out—secondary and possibly later interpretations of *tathāgata-garbha* as a substantive meaning "the embryo of the *Tathāgata*" entail quite different and much more complex philosophical consequences. But that of course is another story . . .

## Abbreviations

A *Aṅguttara-Nikāya* (Pali Text Society Edition).

*AjKV* *Ajātaśatru-kaukṛtya-vinodanā-sūtra.*

*AkTV* *Akṣobhya-tathāgatasya-vyūha.*

*AsPP* Vaidya, P.L., ed., *Aṣṭasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*, Darbhanga: Mithila Institute, 1960.

*BHSD* Edgerton, F., *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Dictionary*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953 [Reprinted Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1970, 1972].

D *Dīgha-Nikāya* (Pali Text Society Edition).

*DKP* *Druma-kinnararāja-paripṛcchā-sūtra.*

*DXJ* *Daoxing jing* or *Daoxing banruo jing* (T.224).

*DZDL* *Dazhidu-lun* (T.1509).

*HBGR* *Hōbōgirin: Dictionnaire encyclopédique du Bouddhisme d'après les sources chinoises et japonaises*, Tokyo, 1929.

*JIABS* *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies.*

*KP* von Staël-Holstein, A., ed., *The Kāyapaparivarta*, Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1926.

*LA* Vaidya, P. L., ed., *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra*, Darbhanga: Mithila Institute, 1963.

*LAn* *Lokānuvartanā-sūtra.*

M *Majjhima-Nikāya* (Pali Text Society Edition).

P Peking Edition of the Tibetan Kanjur (Suzuki Daisetz T., ed., *The Peking Edition of the Tibetan Tripitaka*, Tokyo-Kyoto: Suzuki Research Foundation, 1955–61).

*PraS* *Pratyutpanna-buddha-saṃmukhāvasthita-samādhi-sūtra.*

*PTC* Hare, E. M., et al., eds., *Pali Tipiṭaka Concordance*, London: Pali Text Society, 1955.

*PTSD* Rhys Davids, T. W. & W. Stede, eds., *The Pali Text Society's Pali-English Dictionary*, London: Pali Text Society, 1921–25.

S *Saṃyutta-Nikāya* (Pali Text Society Edition).

*Śikṣā* Vaidya, P. L., ed., *Śikṣā-samuccaya*, Darbhanga: Mithila Institute, 1961.

Skt. Sanskrit.

*SP* Vaidya, P. L., ed., *Saddharma-puṇḍarīka-sūtra*, Darbhanga: Mithila Institute, 1960.

*SR* Vaidya, P. L., ed., *Samādhirāja-sūtra*, Darbhanga: Mithila Institute, 1961.

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Tib. Tibetan.

*Traité* Lamotte, E., *Le Traité de la grande vertu de sagesse de Nāgārjuna (Mahāprajñāpāramitāśāstra)*, 5 vols., Louvain: Institut Orientaliste, 1944–80 [Vols. 1 & 2 reprinted 1966 & 1967].

*TSD* Chandra, Lokesh, *Tibetan-Sanskrit Dictionary*, New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture, 1961 [Reprint edition, Tokyo: Rinsen, 1971].

*Vaj* *Vajracchedikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*.

*WWP* *Wenshushili wen pusa-shu jing* (T.280).

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## Glossary of Chinese characters

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|---|---|
| *Achu-fo guo jing* | 阿閦仏国経 |
| *Banzhou sanmei jing* | 般舟三味経 |
| *Daoxing banruo jing* | 道行般若経 |
| *Dazhidu-lun* | 大智度論 |
| *Dousha jing* | 鬼沙経 |
| *fa* | 法 |
| *fa-jie* | 法界 |
| *fa-shen* | 法身 |
| *Fatian* | 法天 |
| *fa-xing* | 法性 |
| *fo-fa-zang* | 仏法蔵 |
| *fo-jing-shen* | 仏経身 |
| *jing* | 経 |
| *jing-benjie* | 経本界 |
| *jingfa* | 経法 |
| *jingfa-benjie* | 経法本界 |
| *jing-zang-shen* | 経蔵身 |
| *mingjuwei-shen* | 名句味身 |
| *rulai-shen-zhe yi fa wei shi* | 如来身者以法為食 |
| *rulai shen-zhe zhenfa zhi shen* | 如来身者真法之身 |
| *shen* | 身 |
| *wei* | 味 |
| *weili* | 威力 |
| *Wenshushili wen pusa-shu jing* | 文殊師利問菩薩署経 |
| *yi jingfa ming wei shen* | 以経法名為身 |
| *yi jingfa wei shen* | 以経法為身 |
| *yiqie rulai tong yi fajie yi fashen* | 一切如来同一法界一法身 |
| *yi . . . wei . . .* | 以…為… |
| *zhu-fa* | 諸法 |

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# SEARCHING FOR THE ORIGINS OF THE MAHĀYĀNA

## What are we looking for?

*Paul Harrison*

Source: *The Eastern Buddhist*, new series XXVIII, I (1995): 48–69.

When asked by my hosts at Ōtani University to speak on the origins of the Mahāyāna with special reference to methodology, I was at first filled with misgiving, since it would appear that a law of diminishing returns operates in this area: the more one considers the methodological problems involved, the less one can say about the origins of the Mahāyāna. This rather pessimistic observation could in fact be the principal point of this address, but it would, of course, be impolite and unhelpful not to go beyond it. I will try, therefore, to say something about the origins of the Mahāyāna as I see them at present, and about the search for those origins itself. For this reason the title of this address is deliberately ambiguous: "What are we looking for?" can mean both "Why are we looking?" and "What is it that we wish or expect to find?"

Let me start with the first of these two questions. It is perhaps the more difficult to answer, since it raises all sorts of issues to do with the complex interplay between Asian and western academic styles or discourse and the widely varying degrees of personal involvement which Buddhist scholars have with the object of their studies. Why indeed are we so interested in the origins of the Mahāyāna? Well, the fascination with origins, beginnings or sources does appear to be a kind of scholarly universal. Part of this—and this much is clear enough—is the idea that if we can understand the beginnings of something, we are better placed to understand the whole thing, as if its essential character were somehow fixed and readable in the genetic encoding of its conception. There is no doubt that such a view is problematic, i.e., it may *not* be the case that understanding the beginnings of the Mahāyāna (or even the beginnings of Buddhism as a whole) will give us privileged access to the mysteries of the later tradition, but I think the idea is still sufficiently compelling to result in a kind of methodological cliché. However, this way of explaining our interest in this subject is rather intellectual, abstract and impersonal. The search for origins is also bound

up with our own identity, especially for those of us who are Buddhists. We all like to know where we come from, what our ancestry and lineage is, and, as happens when we leaf through an album of old family photographs, we take pleasure in discerning our own features in the portraits of our ancestors, and their features in our faces. Establishing such connections can be important to our sense of who we are. This is a more personal agenda, although it too has a social aspect, in that such a search is bound to reflect wider social concerns and values, wider cultural preoccupations. I shall have occasion to touch on this later. There is a third reason which combines intellectual and personal factors, and that has to do with the very nature of the challenge of scholarship and why we are moved to take it up. Why do we study Buddhism? Why do we spend our whole lives investigating the intricacies of, say, the Vinaya, or Buddhist logic, or Yogācāra doctrine? What is it that drives us to expend so much energy on such details? There are many answers to this question, as many as there are Buddhist scholars, but one answer that I would give has to do with the politics of academia and the prevailing styles of academic discourse. Whether we like to acknowledge it or not, we in the humanities are engaged in a rather strange form of cultural activity, in which reputations are made or broken, status is gained or lost, professorial chairs are won or fail to be won on the basis of our ability to solve problems which we ourselves determine. We are not, of course, entirely free agents in this, choosing as we please, because academic fields are socially constructed, their development and direction conditioned by all sorts of external forces. But within these confines, those who select the most difficult problems and then solve them are often the most successful. That is the more social and political side of the question, but there is a more personal side to it as well, which has to do with the sheer intellectual satisfaction that comes from solving puzzles. Few human activities would appear to be more pointless than solving jigsaw or crossword puzzles, yet many people find them irresistable. The harder the puzzle, the greater the satisfaction derived when it is cracked. I think the same law applies to the puzzles of scholarship, which can obsess us out of all proportion to their objective importance, if one can even speak of such a thing.

As I see it, then, our fascination with the origins and early development of the Mahāyāna can be explained in terms of all these factors. That is to say, understanding this topic successfully will indeed help us to understand Buddhism better; it will help us grasp the lineage of East Asian Buddhism, and our own personal religious ancestry, if we happen to follow an East Asian Buddhist tradition; it will no doubt be productive of academic "merit"; and it will yield considerable intellectual satisfaction. Yet these factors do not exhaust the question; there is always something left, some seductive magic that the subject holds for us as individuals. It is hard to explain what that is, and usually we don't have to: our specialized interests, no matter how obscure, are normally taken for granted, as an accepted part of the academic territory. Speaking personally now, I have never been able to get excited about Buddhist logic, and the more technical aspects of Buddhist philosophy, the architectonic complexities of Madhyamaka

and Yogācāra thought, for example, I am happy to leave to tougher, sharper minds than my own. Of course I recognise the importance of these relatively well-cultivated fields of study, and occasionally I might even venture into them to have a look around, but I take care to keep to the path and stay close to the gate. However, the field of Mahāyāna *sūtra* literature (arguably our best point of access to the early history of the Mahāyāna) fascinates me, and I am happy to wander across its broad expanses. I do not think it is easy country, indeed it teems with all sorts of problems, but its appeal lies precisely in its fertile exuberance, its luxuriant wildness. Perhaps the jungle metaphor is tendentious, in a way which will later become apparent, but it is certainly the case that Mahāyāna *sūtras* burst their bounds, that they range all over the place, unsystematic, exaggerated and larger than life. In short, they possess a kind of organic roughness and wholeness and vitality that is descriptive and constitutive of a total world, a world which obeys different laws from the one we normally inhabit, but into which we can enter.[1] Now obviously one could claim that by being this way these texts reflect more fully the religion which produced them, compared with, say, a Buddhist treatise on logic, which reflects narrower or more focussed intellectual concerns, and that therefore Mahāyāna *sūtras* will tell us more about Buddhism than a work by Dignāga would. But for me this is an *ex post facto* justification, I must admit, my primary motivation for interest in Mahāyāna *sūtras* being more indefinably personal and aesthetic, having perhaps not a little to do with my being a child of the sixties. For others, of course, the interest may spring from entirely different sources. Indeed, I would imagine that it always has a uniquely personal quality, so that the answer to "What are we looking for?" in the sense of "Why are we looking?" will be different for every individual.

Before we now consider what it is we might find, we ought to pause for a moment's reflection on our methods. Mahāyāna *sūtras* obviously image a world, which we may well enjoy visiting for aesthetic or other reasons, but what is the status of that world, and how does it relate to the "real world," the world of Buddhist history? I pose this question because it appears too often to be assumed that these texts are somehow *directly* reflective of the context in which they were produced, and certain historical inferences are drawn from them on that basis which may be unjustified. As a case in point I would like to cite certain aspects of the prodigious and path-breaking scholarship of Professor Hirakawa Akira. Professor Hirakawa's contributions to Buddhist Studies are legion, but I should like in this paper to focus on his theories about the origins of the Mahāyāna in predominantly lay communities of *stūpa*-worshippers. These theories, which are developed in some detail, were first published in English in 1963 in an article entitled "The Rise of Mahāyāna Buddhism and Its Relationship to the Worship of Stupas."[2] They were repeated in Hirakawa's *Shoki daijō bukkyō no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1968) and in Vol. I of his *Indo Bukkyōshi* (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1974), which has more recently been translated into English by Paul Groner as *A History of Indian Buddhism from Śākyamuni to Early Mahāyāna* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990). I assume therefore—

I hope not unfairly—that Professor Hirakawa's views on this topic have not changed significantly in recent years, but even if they have, the original ideas still merit critical inspection, since they continue to be very influential in Japan, and overseas as well. For example, many of them are repeated by Professor Nakamura Hajime in his article on Mahāyāna Buddhism in Mircea Eliade, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Religion* (New York: Macmillan, 1987), a reference source which will exert a strong influence for decades to come. The Groner translation is bound to give them a new lease on life as well.[3]

Now, first of all I agree with Professor Hirakawa about the importance of the earliest Chinese translations of Mahāyāna *sūtras*. Indeed, that is the foundation-stone of my own research. In a field in which chronology and geography are so uncertain, where we have so much difficulty finding reference points in time and space, I think it is essential that we be able to draw some firm historical inferences on the basis of the oldest Chinese translations. This underlies my so-called Lokakṣema Project.[4] We know for certain that the small body of texts translated by this Indo-Scythian missionary and his followers existed in a certain time and a certain place, i.e., Luoyang, late 2nd century.[5] Therefore, if we study them carefully, we will at the very least be able to say that by this date and—with somewhat less force—in this place certain doctrines and practices were in existence. In other words, we will have a base line for future research. My method is therefore synchronic and localised, and it has a fairly modest objective, i.e., to describe Lokakṣema's Mahāyāna. More is not possible. With our kind of work, the temptation to generalize is overwhelming. Even to talk about Buddhism is to generalize, since there are so many different varieties and styles of the religion which pass under that name. Buddhism is an abstraction, a convention, a kind of *saṃvṛti-satya*, and so is Mahāyāna Buddhism. So we have to be careful about elaborating general theories about the Mahāyāna on the basis of this evidence.

With that caveat, the approach I take to the translations of Lokakṣema, the method I use to study them, if I were asked to describe it, is basically what is called "close reading," but it is close reading which attempts to appropriate the texts in their totality, to read them as wholes, alert to all their meanings and all their silences. To do this I find it extremely helpful to utilize the insights of Buddhist anthropology, the work of students of Buddhist culture on the ground, as it were, especially in South East Asia. In this regard I have profited greatly from the researches of Stanley Tambiah, Melford Spiro, Richard Gombrich, Gananath Obeyesekere, Sherry Ortner, Geoffrey Samuel and various others, because they give me clues as to what I should look for in my own sources, what I should take care not to miss. I don't always expect to find the same things, but I often do. And naturally the work of interpretive reading must be preceded and accompanied by the careful comparative philological operations which have become the hallmark of our discipline. If one were to sum up this approach, then, one could call it a kind of "textual anthropology," if that were not a contradiction in terms.[6]

The principal point at issue here is that anthropology by its nature is forced to take a wider view of its subject, because, however narrow the theoretical

agendas of its practitioners might be, they have to deal with real, whole people. Melford Spiro is a good example: although his Freudian analysis of the Burmese is at times irritating and constricting, and his own knowledge of the classical Buddhist tradition is occasionally rather limited, his work is nonetheless highly illuminating.[7] Textual scholars, by contrast, can take a narrow approach and get away with imposing it on their subjects. They can focus on narrow doctrinal or philosophical issues and somehow imagine that they have done justice to their texts. But they have not. In this respect, I think, the fact that so many Buddhist scholars now work in Religious Studies departments means that they are becoming increasingly sensitized to the importance of the cultic, ritual, iconographical and other such dimensions of Buddhism, in short, to the importance of Buddhist practice. Indeed, every year I tell my students that, contrary to appearances, in Buddhism practice often comes first, theory afterwards. This is surely true of early Mainstream Buddhism, and I suspect it is also true of the Mahāyāna.

What is it, after all, to understand a religion, or a religious movement? Religions do not succeed or flourish because their doctrines are intellectually compelling, or their ideals are morally noble, but because they—or rather their practitioners—capture people's imaginations in a certain way, they arouse their faith and convince them that they provide an exclusive or unique access to whatever power is held to underlie or pervade the world, to the numinous, to the transcendent, call it what you will. To understand a religion, therefore, it is necessary to ask the question: how did this religion lay claim to power? I shall return to this theme later, but I should note at this point that I am using the word power in a very broad sense and would wish to avoid any sort of reductionism. A religion's power—in the broad sense—lies in its symbols, and those symbols are by their very nature not reducible to a set of propositions, or a body of doctrines or moral guidelines. Still less is a religion's power reducible to narrow socio-political considerations of control and dominance.

Now, all these airy generalities are well and good, you are no doubt thinking, but how exactly do they relate to the topic? What do I have to say about the origins of the Mahāyāna?

To begin with, to be frank, I doubt that I or anyone else can say anything definite about the origins of the Mahāyāna or—and this may be less expected—even about early Mahāyāna. The more I work in this field the more sceptical I become about such an undertaking. As Professor Hirakawa has noted, the *sūtras* translated by Lokakṣema were probably composed at some time before 150 C.E., but some of them appear already to have undergone a long process of accretion.[8] He thus pushes the date of their composition back in many cases to the 1st century C.E., but it is difficult to be sure if this is going far enough. For some of these early translations seem to refer to other, even earlier *sūtras*, and Hirakawa makes particular mention of references in the *Kāśyapa-parivarta* (*KP*) and elsewhere to the *Bodhisattva-piṭaka*, the *Ṣaṭ-pāramitā*, and the *Triskandhaka-dharma-paryāya*, treating these as if they were discrete texts.[9] Of course, works with these titles survive, in Chinese and/or Tibetan, but there is no guar-

antee that they are the ones referred to. Indeed, in the case of references to the *bodhisattva-piṭaka*, I suspect that we are dealing with a rather elastic *category* of texts rather than a single defined work.[10] The same is probably true of the *Ṣaṭ-pāramitā*, but one ought to note that this is reminiscent of one of the alternative titles of the *Druma-kinnara-rāja-paripṛcchā-sūtra* (*DKP*), which contains within itself a long and fairly systematic 32-part exposition of all six perfections. We ought at least to consider the possibility that the larger work has incorporated the smaller.[11] As for the *triskandhaka*, many of the references are probably to a ritual complex, and not to a text. For all that, it can still be argued that by the time of Lokakṣema the Mahāyāna had already been in existence for several centuries, and that some of its scriptures had not only been a long time in the making, but had in the process also drawn on even older traditions, both textual and ritual. I prefer, therefore, to think of most of the extant translations of this period as works of the *early middle* period of the movement and to regard the early period as more or less out of reach, except for the survival of a few archaic works in the oeuvres of Lokakṣema and other translators. For example, the *Lokānuvartanā-sūtra* (*LAn*) may be a work of this type, and I suspect the *KP* is also very old. However, a great deal more research will need to be done on these texts before we can be sure about their relative chronology. With this caveat, therefore, I still believe we can use the translations of Lokakṣema, our oldest dateable evidence, to draw some conclusions about the nature of at least some forms of the Mahāyāna as it entered its medieval phase, conclusions which may also hold good for its earliest period. But there are, I believe, some things which we cannot do.

One of the things we cannot do with these materials is determine the sectarian affiliation of the early Mahāyāna. I used to think that this was possible, but now believe it to be hopeless, since it has become accepted that the Mahāyāna was a pan-Buddhist movement—or, better, a loose set of movements—rather like Pentecostalism or Charismatic Christianity, running across sectarian boundaries. This, incidentally, is why the term Nikāya or Sectarian Buddhism (Japanese: *buha bukkyō*) seems to me less than apt for non-Mahāyāna, since it must surely be the case that the Mahāyāna was "pervaded" by so-called Nikāya Buddhism (i.e., all ordained Mahāyānists were members of a *nikāya*, but not all *nikāya* members were Mahāyānists). Therefore I prefer to use the term "Mainstream Buddhism." If we accept that *bhikṣus* and *bhikṣuṇīs* belonging to many or even all Mainstream *nikāyas* or Vinaya lineages may have been followers of the Mahāyāna, then we must also accept that Mahāyāna literature, as it circulated, is likely to have been subject to diverse sectarian pressures. To illustrate this point, a *sūtra* composed in a Mahāsāṃghika milieu is likely to have reflected Mahāsāṃghika doctrinal preferences, but when later circulated by monks and nuns whose ordination lineage was Sarvāstivādin or Dharmaguptaka, it could easily have been changed, either inadvertently or deliberately, to fit its new context.[12] If this supposition is correct, we have very little means of establishing the sectarian origins of any given Mahāyāna *sūtra*, since the form in which it is

extant may reflect its original context or a later one. While this caveat is true for minor doctrinal items (e.g., six *gatis* instead of five), it does not hold with the same force, I suspect, for major doctrinal emphases (e.g., lokottaravādin buddhology), but even there we may still need to tread very carefully, and avoid overly hasty conclusions.[13]

If the early or original Mahāyāna lies hidden behind our oldest literary sources and if the question of the sectarian origins of the movement must remain unanswered and unanswerable, surely we can deduce certain things about the make-up of some forms of the early middle Mahāyāna from the translations of Lokakṣema. Yes, this is possible, although there are still difficulties. In effect, as I have said, we can only draw conclusions concerning the milieu in which the Lokakṣema *sūtras* were composed, if indeed they all came from the same milieu. It is possible that they did not. However, assuming that they did, I would like to focus on five general themes with regard to which they might give us some clues, relating these where appropriate to Hirakawa's theories about the early Mahāyāna. The five are: the role of the laity; cult-practice directed towards *bodhisattvas*, the Buddha and *stūpas*; the wider cultural context of the new movement; the role of meditation; and the significance of magic. As we shall see, all these themes are closely interconnected, so it is not entirely easy to separate them out for the purposes of analysis.

The first theme raises the question of what has become known in sociological work on the Japanese New Religions by Helen Hardacre and others as "lay centrality." Hirakawa has stated baldly that early Mahāyāna Buddhism was primarily lay in character, stressing the lay origins of the movement and the role of the lay *bodhisattva* in its texts.[14] Naturally he admits the existence of the renunciant or *pravrajita bodhisattva*, but he ascribes historical priority to the *gṛhastha bodhisattva*. "Two types of Mahāyāna bodhisattva are distinguished in Mahāyāna literature: lay and monastic. The monastic bodhisattva model was the youth (*kumāra*) who practiced religious austerities and lived a celibate life. No precepts specifically for the monastic bodhisattva seem to have existed. In the older Mahāyāna texts the precepts mentioned are all lay precepts."[15] This statement and others like it are a little misleading. It is quite natural that no precepts for the monastic *bodhisattva* existed, since Mahāyāna *bhikṣus* and *bhikṣuṇīs* would have already been covered by the Vinaya of their respective *nikāya* or ordination lineage. This is stated explicitly, for example, in the *Pratyutpanna-buddha-saṃmukhāvasthita-samādhi-sūtra* (*PraS*), one of the older Mahāyāna texts which Hirakawa himself cites, at 9B and 9Mv1, where *pravrajita bodhisattvas* are enjoined to observe the Prātimokṣa (see also *KP* 134). And yet Hirakawa asserts that this early evidence points in the opposite direction.[16] The relative silence of the texts in this regard surely means that it was taken for granted that fully ordained *bodhisattvas* were bound by the Vinaya of their *nikāya*. This relates to the more general issue of institutional organisation: Hirakawa asserts that Mahāyānists, specifically monastic *bodhisattvas*, formed their own orders, which were "organised in a fashion similar to that of the orders of Nikāya Bud-

dhism."[17] I would say that this poses too much of a split, and there is insufficient evidence for it: it is probable that the organisation of monastic *bodhisattvas* was itself along *nikāya* lines. It is not likely, therefore, that the early Mahāyānists functioned with an incomplete or small set of rules and only later adopted the rules used by the "Hīnayāna" monastic orders, as Hirakawa claims. His view of an originally lay movement taken over by monks and nuns is, I think, almost the reverse of the truth. In this respect I would modify his view of what he calls Nikāya Buddhism as one of the origins of the Mahāyāna; I would prefer to call it the matrix, postulating thereby a much more intimate and permanent relationship.[18]

In any case, coming at the problem from another angle, I think we have to be very careful about what we mean by the "laity" in Buddhism, and specifically, how we understand the meaning of the terms *upāsaka* and *upāsikā*, of such frequent occurrence in our sources. To divide Buddhist society into two groups, clergy and laity, is simplistic and unduly influenced by inappropriate Western categories, as scholars like Hubert Durt have pointed out.[19] Such a model is an inadequate representation of the real situation, at least in the Indian context, and probably elsewhere in the Buddhist world as well. The status of the clergy—*bhikṣus* and *bhikṣuṇīs*—is relatively unproblematical. It is with the so-called laity that the difficulties begin, which is of the essence here, given the importance of lay centrality and the householder *bodhisattva* in the received wisdom concerning the Mahāyāna. To put it simply, the terms *upāsaka* and *upāsikā* do not mean "layman" and "laywoman" in the usual English sense, but refer rather to persons hovering just below ordained status, those who are, as it were, semi-ordained. "Lay practitioner" might be a useful translation for them. In any event such persons are to be distinguished from the greater run of supporters of the Buddhist teaching and the Buddhist monastic establishment. Even in that regard there are no doubt finer distinctions to be drawn, between those who supported Buddhism exclusively and those who supported Buddhism along with other *śramaṇa* movements and *brāhmaṇas*. At the extreme end of this spectrum of participation stood those who paid no attention to Buddhism at all, who would still be subsumed under a very loose definition of the English word "laity," viz., anybody who is not clergy. There are some wider implications in all of this, but at this point I merely wish to highlight the meaning of the words *upāsaka* and *upāsikā*. Our current notions of the householder *bodhisattva* do, I think, reflect our own cultural contexts rather too heavily. In Japan a married priesthood and, more recently, the upsurge in the so-called "New Religions" (Sōka Gakkai, Reiyūkai, etc.) with their strong emphasis on lay participation and the attendant relegation of the clergy to supporting roles predispose many scholars to finding a charter in the scriptures of Mahāyāna Buddhism for these circumstances. In the West the situation is a little different, but for committed Western Buddhists with strong democratic and anti-hierarchical tendencies, the cosy and relaxed domesticity of unordained participation with perhaps periodic bursts of monastic asceticism provides a model for which antecedents may be thought desirable.

Thus the spirit of Vimalakīrti is invoked to legitimate all types of Buddhist involvement and degrees of commitment. However, the *upāsakas* and *upāsikās* on whom this fictional character was presumably based may have been rather different types of people. I suspect, in fact, that they were more ascetic types, who for some reason were unwilling to take that final step of ordination, but were nevertheless committed to rigorous meditation and ritual practice in what was essentially an adjunct role: not independent of the Saṅgha, let alone in competition with it, but attached to it. Like the people who still bear the title *upāsaka* and *upāsikā* in Theravādin societies today, they were probably advanced in years. They were not, I suspect, your average lay supporters, dropping into the monastery on the odd *poṣadha* weekend for a spot of casual meditation and *sūtra*-chanting. In short, I feel very uneasy about any interpretation of the Mahāyāna as a kind of alternative Buddhism made easy for the masses, just as I am reluctant to see it as a devotional shortcut, a topic to which I shall now turn.

Later Mahāyāna Buddhism has an extensive cultic repertoire, the history of which has yet to be unravelled. One aspect of that repertoire is the well-known cult of the great *bodhisattvas*. In an earlier article[20] I examined the evidence for this in the early translations and came to the conclusion that—as far as these sources were concerned—the *bodhisattva*-cult was not the be-all and end-all of the Mahāyāna, as is often supposed, but a later and secondary development. As I put it then, "as far as *bodhisattvas* are concerned the *initial* message of the Mahāyāna is clear: people should not worship *bodhisattvas*, they should become *bodhisattvas* themselves." Nowadays I would be less dogmatic about this, since the cult of the great, mythical or so-called celestial *bodhisattvas* is not necessarily inconsistent with the pursuit of the *bodhisattva* path—in other words, it is theoretically possible to combine the ideal of aspiration with the ideal of inspiration—but in general terms my position is the same.

Of course, the cult of the *bodhisattvas* is just one aspect of Mahāyāna cult-practice. Even more important is the cult of the Buddha, which brings us to the question of *stūpa*-worship. Professor Hirakawa's views on this are well-known.[21] He hypothesizes that lay pressure for a source of salvation led to a kind of devotional movement centred on *stūpas* and run by lay people themselves, independent of monastic control. *Stūpas*, he says, were predominantly for the laity. The specific textual sources for such a view (especially the oft-cited passage in the *Mahā-parinirvāṇa-sūtra* about *śarīra-pūjā*) have been extensively and convincingly critiqued by Schopen, and it is unnecessary to repeat the arguments here.[22] Speaking more generally, it is implausible that such a powerful movement as *stūpa*-worship would ever have been allowed to pass under predominantly lay control, since that would have posed a major threat to the livelihood of the Saṅgha. Even if it had not been the case directly after the *parinirvāṇa* of Gautama, surely monks and nuns would soon have moved to take control of this potent symbolic apparatus and source of economic support. Naturally they would have appointed laypeople to run the business end of things for

them, but I imagine the ultimate control would have remained in their hands, with most *stūpas* being sited in or near monastic compounds. On this the archeological and anthropological record in South East Asia is perfectly clear: even in the Theravāda environment, the *stūpa*-cult has remained one of the foundations of the religion. Indeed, nowhere is the prevalence of the *stūpa*-cult throughout the Buddhist world more strikingly illustrated than at the site of the ancient Burmese capital of Pagan, a stronghold of Theravāda. It is consequently only natural that *stūpas* would appear often in Mahāyāna sources, like many other common features of Mainstream Buddhism, but if one reads them carefully, one comes to different conclusions about any inherent link between the Mahāyāna and *stūpa*-worship. *Stūpa*-worship, or, as it is often expressed, making offerings to the Realized Ones (*Tathāgatas*), is indeed frequently cited as (hitherto) the most meritorious activity conceivable, but the purpose is not to promote it, nor even to forbid it, but to compare it unfavourably with other religious activities or values, e.g., the realisation of *prajñā-pāramitā*, the memorisation of *sūtras*, or the practice of *samādhi*. Indeed, the emphasis on the notion of *dharma-kāya* (not exclusive to the Mahāyāna) and on the related cult of the book explored by Schopen are best understood as an attempt to reinterpret the *stūpa*-cult.[23] Is this the work of a lay order of *stūpa*-worshippers engaged in devotional religion? I believe it is quite the contrary: it is the work of a predominantly monastic order of meditators engaged in strenuous ascetic practices, people asserting, in short, that the Buddha is to be found in and through the realisation of the dharma, not the worship of relics.

There is no space here to go into the many detailed arguments advanced by Hirakawa to substantiate his theories on this aspect of Mahāyāna Buddhism, but I believe that they will not withstand critical scrutiny. For example, he invokes the argument from silence to claim that where *stūpas* bear no inscriptions mentioning a *nikāya*, they must therefore have been looked after and used by Mahāyānists.[24] Indeed, Hirakawa is right to be tentative about this. Equally suspect is his claim that because the Vinaya forbids monks to do certain things, they could not have participated in the *stūpa*-cult.[25] Schopen has recently shown the danger of such arguments, which privilege textual sources above the overwhelming archeological evidence.[26] Further, Hirakawa's exegesis of Chinese terms for *vihāra* and *stūpa* in successive translations of Indic texts and his attempt to postulate some kind of historical development on that basis need to be reexamined closely.[27]

The archeological evidence is indeed extremely important, as Professors Shizutani Masao and Hirakawa have pointed out and as Schopen has continued to show. But it hardly renders the evidence of the texts worthless; indeed, it can help us to interpret that evidence more effectively. In the process of doing this, I think we might also try to arrive at a rather more careful imaging or picturing of the cultural and religious context in which Buddhism developed during the first five centuries after the death of Gautama, towards the end of which period the Mahāyāna as we first encounter it in the translations of Lokakṣema took shape.

What kind of world was it? Well, the clues are there for us to see in the Buddhist texts themselves, which frequently refer to the two classes of religious practitioners in general—*brāhmaṇas* and *śramaṇas*—and to other *śramaṇa* movements in particular, either by the generic terms *tīrthika, anya-tīrthika* and so on, or specifically by name. It is clear from these references that the India of Gautama's day and after was the site of what we would call ideological contestation, in which many religious groups laid claim to the veneration and respect of the population. In practical terms, however, what this meant was that they were laying claim to the material support of the people. When Buddhist texts glorify the Buddha as the supreme one in the world, the unsurpassed *puṇya-kṣetra* or field of merit, there is a subtext or even a "bottom line" we should not forget. Such claims reflect what in the business-speak of today's world would be called an attempt to enlarge market share, a push unlikely to abate even when royal support could be counted on.

This leads me to what I regard as one of the most important and least emphasised features of Mahāyāna *sūtras* and indeed of Buddhism as a whole: the pivotal role of magic. Others have commented on this—in English I might cite in particular the articles by Stephan Beyer and Luis Gómez[28]—but there is more work to be done before we plumb the full significance of this theme. Indeed, speaking now in general terms, I believe that Buddhism is, and has always been, a "shamanic" type of religion, in that the role of the members of the Saṅgha *in society* is not primarily that of exemplary salvation-seekers, nor that of priestly intermediaries, but that of masters of techniques of ecstasy enabling them to access in person another order of reality and transmit the power resulting from that access to others. This function, however, is effectively cloaked by an all-pervasive monastic rhetoric. In my view only this kind of analysis can make sense of Buddhism's extraordinary success as a religion. Applying it, we might see that, in a situation of competition for resources between religious groups, what counted was not so much the philosophical cogency of one's ideas, or even the purity of one's moral observances, but the power perceived to have been generated by one's ascetic practices, especially one's meditation. Indeed, the emphasis on purity cannot be fully understood without this in mind. Moral impurity—infractions of *śīla*, especially the codes relating to sexual behaviour—destroy one's meditation. This is illustrated in a story from the *Upāya-kauśalya-sūtra*, in which a *bodhisattva* falsely accused of misconduct with a woman rises to the height of seven palm trees in the air, thereby confounding his accusers. The text states the message explicitly: an immoral person has no magical powers.[29] Now, it is said often enough that the reason why the Saṅgha has throughout history had its most severe schisms over the Vinaya, not over doctrine, is because of the possible impact on the laity if the Order were thought to be morally lax. But surely this is only half the explanation. Moral laxity bothers the lay supporters of Buddhism, as we all know, because their gifts do not bear fruit, yet even this doesn't quite get to the bottom of it. Surely it is because the laity perceive that an immoral clergy lacks power,

the power derived from sexual abstinence, asceticism, and meditation. One look at the anthropological record in Theravādin countries proves the point. As has been richly documented, especially by Stanley Tambiah, lay veneration and support reaches its most extravagant heights when directed towards meditating forest-dwelling monks with a reputation for moral incorruptibility and magical powers.[30]

Let us return to the Mahāyāna. As we are often reminded nowadays, this was probably not one single movement, but the convergence of several trends within Buddhism. One of these, I would suggest, was a meditation movement. My hypothesis, yet to be substantiated in detail, is that some of the impetus for the early development of the Mahāyāna came from forest-dwelling monks.[31] Far from being the products of an urban, lay, devotional movement, many Mahāyāna *sūtras* give evidence of a hard-core ascetic attempt to return to the original inspiration of Buddhism, the search for Buddhahood or awakened cognition. What is that evidence? The monastic or renunciant bias of the Lokakṣema texts I have already pointed out in my earlier work, but they also display a strong and positive emphasis on the *dhuta-guṇas* (extra ascetic practices) and *araṇya-vāsa* (dwelling in the forest or jungle), which is surely rather strange in the documents of a supposedly lay-dominated movement. Indeed, Hirakawa himself has already pointed out the importance of the forest meditation centre or *āraṇyāyatana* for the early Mahāyāna,[32] without acknowledging how inconsistent this might be with his hypothetical lay *stūpa*-cult. But above all, we find a heavy emphasis on *samādhi*. Two of the texts translated by Lokakṣema are explicitly devoted to *samādhi* practice: the *PraS* and the *Śūraṃ-gama-samādhi-sūtra* (Lokakṣema's version of this is now lost). Further, many other texts in this corpus and elsewhere contain long lists of *samādhis*, the exact significance of which has yet to be determined, or reflect the importance of meditation practice in other ways. It is clear from these indications that meditation must therefore have occupied a crucial place in the development of this movement, not merely, we may suppose, because its followers saw it as a good thing to do, as spiritually efficacious. It was also important, no doubt, because it provided a channel for fresh revelation and inspiration, explaining the extraordinary proliferation of Mahāyāna scriptures. But, most of all, it was important because meditation and the resulting powers gave the Mahāyānists an edge in their struggle for resources. This struggle, we may assume, was a double one: both against the wider religious community (the normal competitive framework), and also against other Buddhists, with whom they shared ordination lineages and institutional structures. Some of these co-religionists were clearly hostile to the new movement. The followers of the Mahāyāna had to lay claim to be in a sense the true successors of Gautama, the inheritors of his mantle, and they had to establish that claim both with other Buddhists and with the population at large. There were, as far as I can see, two possible ways of doing this: by the possession of relics, and by the (perceived) possession of ascetic techniques and magical powers.[33] Hence the glorification of the great *bodhisattvas* in the texts can be

seen as an attempt to establish the Mahāyāna's prior claim to veneration and support, combining an explicit appeal to an established symbol (the figure of the great sage himself, imitated by his successors) with an implicit appeal to the powers and attainments of practitioners of the day. My point is this: the magical apparitions and miraculous displays in Mahāyāna *sūtras* are not just some kind of narrative padding or scaffolding for the elaboration of doctrine; they are the very essence of the Mahāyāna's struggle to make a place for itself and to survive in a competitive environment.

If a substantial proportion of early Mahāyānists were forest-dwelling meditating monks, would that not explain the absence of references to the Mahāyāna in the earlier inscriptions, which has been noted by Hirakawa, Schopen and others? I suspect it would, especially if we concede that this was a minority movement in any case. Given that a large proportion of our Buddhist inscriptions are found at *stūpa* sites, wouldn't the comparative scarcity of Mahāyāna inscriptions at *stūpas* sit uneasily with the theory of lay *stūpa*-worship origins? And would it make sense to postulate a devotional movement centred around *stūpas* as the starting point of a movement devoted to a more ambitious asceticism?

All that said, we still have to explain the large number of references to lay *bodhisattvas* in the early scriptures. Naturally, even a renegade or revolutionary movement like the Mahāyāna—if we assume it to have been of this nature—would still have to enlist and cultivate the support of the population. My view is that it did this by offering them rather more liberal access to some of the fruits of the monastic life, in particular meditation, and by promising them powers that they would normally expect to be available only to ordained ascetics. The *PraS* is a good case in point: the direct encounter with the Buddhas of the present is possible even if one has not mastered the five or six *abhijñās* or supernormal faculties, usually accessible only after prolonged *dhyāna* practice. My reading of this is that it represents meditating monks (and nuns?) reaching out for lay support, rather than lay pressure on the monastic preserve. But that does not necessarily encompass all the laity, only the semi-ordained, i.e., *upāsakas* and *upāsikās*. It is doubtful that the currency would have been so readily devalued, given the care with which the Buddhist establishment has always watched over the exercise of supernormal powers (hence the *pārājika* offense relating to false claims to them). Even so, the semi-ordained would probably have provided an important pivot with the lay community, as their extended families would also have been drawn into the wider support networks underpinning the operation of Mahāyānist monastic communities. In economic terms the encouragement offered to them would make perfect sense.

As for the glorification of the lay *bodhisattva*, an undoubted feature of many Mahāyāna *sūtras*, we must be careful how we interpret the texts. My provisional view is that the lay *bodhisattva* is glorified and given pride of place not to put laypeople above monks and nuns, but to put *bodhisattvas* above *śrāvakas*. That is to say, if even the lay *bodhisattva* is superior to the ordained *śrāvaka*, how much more so the ordained *bodhisattva*. The point at issue is not social status,

but the absolute worth of *bodhicitta* and *bodhisattva*-hood. *Śrāvakas*, after all, are not necessarily monks and nuns, even though they often may be: it is a spiritual category, not a social one, that is being referred to.[34] The lay *bodhisattvas* may thus be said to outrank the Mainstream *bhikṣus* and *bhikṣuṇīs* spiritually, but they are soon enough put in their place when it comes to the social and religious conventions of the day: they must pay respect to the ordained and they ought to leave the household life themselves as soon as they can. Monasticism rules, as does maleness, but that is a topic which demands more careful treatment than is possible here. My general point is that we should not read these sources uncritically, or mistake their rhetorical and mythical flourishes—to say nothing of their insults and put-downs!—as direct reflections of sociological or historical fact.[35] After all, nobody would interpret the *Candrottarā-dārikā-vyākaraṇa* as evidence for the fact that the Mahāyāna was a movement begun or led by eight-year old girls. In many respects these works are a kind of literature of the fantastic, albeit with a serious religious purpose. Just as we would not read the works of Jorge Luis Borges as history even if they appear to be historical—we know what tricks he gets up to—so too we have to decode the fantasies of the Mahāyāna with great care.

The foregoing remarks have tried, perhaps illicitly, to fit the data culled from my reading of a tiny fraction of Mahāyāna *sūtra*-literature into some kind of general explanatory framework. My thoughts about the early development of the Mahāyāna, at least as far as we can see it in these texts—that it was not primarily a lay devotional movement linked to the worship of *stūpas*, but a renunciant ascetic meditation movement—are entirely provisional, and will have to be checked continually against the earliest Chinese translations. I find that every time I read a text, even one I have read many times before, I see something new. Thus I am constantly in the process of revising my own theories against the evidence, and I expect others to be engaged in this process too, to critique my ideas and their own. In that regard it is heartening to see the amount of innovative and critical scholarly activity in this area of late.[36] But there is something more I want to say, and it is this. While there is nothing wrong with synthesizing the evidence and trying to paint the big picture, at the same time each Mahāyāna *sūtra* has its individual and specific value, has a life and integrity of its own which is almost organic. This specificity, this individual integrity will undoubtedly be damaged or even lost entirely when passed through the mangle of some general theory like the one I have sketched here. That is why I believe that each of these works should be studied and translated as a whole. Each of them was written by an unknown person or group of persons who lived and died roughly two thousand years ago. Into them they poured their ultimate concern, to borrow Paul Tillich's phrase. Their bones have long since turned to dust, their ashes scattered on the wind in the ten directions, and now only their words remain, however distorted by time, translation and our own faulty powers of interpretation. These works are not more or less marvellous than the deserted ruins of a lost civilization that we might find scattered over the surface of some distant

planet. We should not be too hasty in dismantling them in order to use the materials to build our own monoliths.

This brings me back to the point at which I began, and to the two questions which I set for us to consider. I think it is true that when we study any subject we do it, in one way or another, out of some desire to find out about ourselves. However, we should not be too eager to impose our own image on our subjects lest we fail to see their image when and where it can be made out. It has been said with regard to the quest for the origins of Christianity than when a modern Liberal Protestant theologian looked down the well of history in search of the historical Jesus what he saw looking back up at him through nineteen centuries of Catholic darkness was the face of a modern Liberal Protestant theologian.[37] A cautionary reflection indeed! I suspect, in fact, that when we look down the well of history in the search for the people who began the Mahāyāna—if we can make anything out at that depth—the faces we see looking back up at us will be leaner and more ascetic than we expected, and their eyes will burn with a religious zeal fiercer and more uncompromising than we might have anticipated.

## Notes

* This is the edited text of a public lecture delivered at Ōtani University in December 1992, a revised version of which was later presented at Oxford in early 1994. Intended as a personal reflection on some new perspectives in the study of Mahāyāna Buddhism, it dispenses with the detailed argumentation and copious annotation that the issues raised deserve. Readers are assured that this deficiency will be remedied in a forthcoming monograph.

1 If I were asked to come up with an analogous phenomenon, it would have to be the Hindi movie, in the Bombay style. Many of the same features are there: the cast of thousands, the complicated plot with its multiple improbabilities, the supernatural interventions and miracles, the frequent bursts of song, the speechifying and moralising, the bright colours, and the extreme length. Mahāyāna *sūtras* are also informed by this aesthetic of exaggeration, and, like Hindi movies, they are best appreciated as wholes, as a kind of total experience, since individual features, once abstracted, may become meaningless or even ridiculous.

2 In the *Memoirs of the Research Department of the Toyo Bunko*, No. 22 (1963), pp. 57–106.

3 Similar considerations apply to the ideas of that other great pioneer in this area, the Belgian scholar Étienne Lamotte, but these are not addressed specifically in this paper.

4 For a brief description of this project and its rationale see my "The Earliest Chinese Translations of Mahāyāna Sūtras: Some Notes on the Works of Lokaksema," *Buddhist Studies Review*, 10, 2 (1993), pp. 135–177.

5 The nine texts in question are the *Aṣṭa-sāhasrikā-prajñā-pāramitā-sūtra* (*AsPP*), *Pratyutpanna-buddha-saṃmukhāvasthita-samādhi-sūtra* (*PraS*), *Druma-kinnara-rāja-paripṛcchā-sūtra* (*DKP*), *Ajātaśatru-kaukṛtya-vinodanā-sūtra* (*AjKV*), part of the *Avataṃsaka* (*DSJ*), *Lokānuvartanā-sūtra* (*LAn*), *Wenshushili wen pusa-shu jing* (*WWP*), *Kāśyapa-parivarta* (*KP*), and the *Akṣobhya-tathāgatasya-vyūha* (*AkTV*). Citations in this paper will be to my own translations or editions. For full bibliographical details see my article "The Earliest Chinese Translations."

6 I owe this methodological ideal of philological rigour on the one hand and anthropological awareness on the other to a number of mentors, but have been inspired chiefly by Professors Jan Willem de Jong and Lambert Schmithausen in regard to the first desideratum and by Professsor Gregory Schopen in regard to the second.

7 I am referring of course to his *Buddhism and Society: A Great Tradition and Its Burmese Vicissitudes* (2nd ed., Berkeley: University of California, 1982).

8 This is especially true of the best known of them, the *Aṣṭa-sāhasrikā-prajñā-pāramitā-sūtra* or *Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines* (*AsPP*).

9 See *History of Indian Buddhism*, p. 275.

10 On this question, see now Ulrich Pagel, *The Bodhisattvapiṭaka: Its Doctrines, Practices and their Position in Mahāyāna Literature* (Tring: Institute of Buddhist Studies, 1995).

11 This possibility is confirmed in the case of the *Ajātaśatru-kaukṛtya-vinodanā-sūtra* (*AjKV*), another text translated by Lokakṣema, which has indeed swallowed another, smaller *sūtra* whole. Incidentally the *DKP* contains a reference to the *AjKV*.

12 Sadly this distortion is most likely where it could be most revealing, i.e., in citations and paraphrases of Āgama texts.

13 Cf., e.g., Hirakawa, "The Rise of Mahāyāna," pp. 61, 63, where he concludes that the prominence of certain *dvādaśāṅga* sequences in Mahāyāna *sūtras* is proof Sarvāstivādin affiliations. However, see also the note of caution he sounds on p. 69.

14 See, e.g., *History of Indian Buddhism*, pp. 259, 310.

15 Ibid., p. 308; see also pp. 302–303.

16 "The Rise of Mahāyāna," p. 74.

17 *History of Indian Buddhism*, p. 310.

18 See also Paul Williams, *Mahāyāna Buddhism: The Doctrinal Foundations* (London: Routledge, 1989), pp. 20ff. The specifically institutional aspects of Hirakawa's theories have more recently been the object of a devastating critique by Richard Gombrich, in an article written in 1994 for a Festschrift for Professor K.K. Dasgupta: "Organized Bodhisattvas: A Blind Alley in Buddhist Historiography." I thank Professor Gombrich for showing me a preliminary draft of this. A paper on the same theme by Sasaki Shizuka was apparently read at the International Association of Buddhist Studies conference in Mexico City in October 1994, but I have not seen a copy yet.

19 "Bodhisattva and Layman in the Early Mahāyāna," *Japanese Religions*, Vol. 16, No. 3 (1991), pp. 1–16. See esp. pp. 4–5.

20 "Who Gets to Ride in the Great Vehicle? Self-image and Identity Among the Followers of the Early Mahāyāna," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (1987), pp. 67–89; see especially pp. 79–80.

21 See, e.g., *History of Indian Buddhism*, pp. 270–274.

22 See Schopen's "Monks and the Relic Cult in the *Mahāparinibbānasutta:* An Old Misunderstanding in Regard to Monastic Buddhism," in G. Schopen and K. Shinohara, eds., *From Benares to Beijing: Essays on Buddhism and Chinese Religion in Honor of Jan Yün-hua* (Oakville: Mosaic Press, 1991), pp. 187–201.

23 See Gregory Schopen, "The phrase '*sa pṛthivīpradeśaś caityabhūto bhavet*' in the *Vajracchedikā*: Notes on the Cult of the Book in Mahāyāna," *Indo-Iranian Journal*, Vol. 17 (1975), pp. 147–181. In my view Schopen over-emphasizes the negative attitude displayed by Mahāyāna *sūtras* towards *stūpa* worship.

24 See "The Rise of Mahāyāna," pp. 100–102; *History of Indian Buddhism*, pp. 245–246.

25 See "The Rise of Mahāyāna," p. 100.

26 See especially "Archeology and Protestant Presuppositions in the Study of Indian Buddhism," *History of Religions*, Vol. 31 (1991), pp. 1–23.

27 "The Rise of Mahāyāna," pp. 89–98.

28 Stephan Beyer, "Notes on the Vision Quest in Early Mahāyāna," in Lewis Lancaster, ed., *Prajñāpāramitā and Related Systems: Studies in Honor of Edward Conze* (Berkeley: University of California, 1977) pp. 329–340; Luis Gómez, "The Bodhisattva as Wonder-worker," in the same volume, pp. 221–261.

29 See Mark Tatz, *The Skill in Means (Upāyakauśalya) Sūtra* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1994), pp. 35–36.

30 Stanley Tambiah, *The Buddhist Saints of the Forest and the Cult of Amulets* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984). See also Spiro, *Buddhism and Society*, pp. 402–404.

31 And nuns, one might be tempted to add, out of a modern inclusivistic spirit, were it not for the way in which the various Vinayas severely circumscribed the activities of women members of the Saṅgha.

32 *History of Indian Buddhism*, pp. 309–310.

33 Another way of stating this would be to say that they had to show possession of the dharma, either concretised in the relics of the Buddha or other realised persons and in written texts, or (better still) realised in practice as magical powers and other signs of attainment.

34 For evidence that the term *śrāvaka* does not mean monk or even disciple, see my "Who Gets to Ride," pp. 81–82. A pertinent discussion may be found in Peter Masefield, *Divine Revelation in Pāli Buddhism* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1986), especially Chapter 1.

35 But see "The Rise of Mahāyāna," pp. 71, 80–81, 83–84 for some examples of such an approach.

36 As is evidenced by the Mahāyāna *sūtra* panel at the I.A.B.S. Conference in Mexico (October 1994), and by the work in progress of such scholars as Sasaki Shizuka and Jonathan Silk.

37 This was said by Tyrell of the work of Adolf von Harnack; see George Tyrell, *Christianity at the Crossroads* (London: Longmans Green, 1909), p. 44. I owe the reference to my former colleague Colin Brown.

# 40

# THE RISE OF MAHĀYĀNA BUDDHISM AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO THE WORSHIP OF STŪPAS

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The beginnings of Mahāyāna Buddhism are shrouded in the nebulous past, hidden forever in lost literary and archaeological records. Many Buddhist scholars maintain the theory that the Mahāyāna originated from the Mahāsāṁghika School 大衆部.. It is true that on doctrinal matters a number of strong similarities exists between the two, but on the other hand several important ideas of Mahāyāna Buddhism are based upon the doctrines of the Sarvāstivādin School 說一切有部. This is evident even from an examination of the basic teachings contained in Nāgārjuna's *Mahāprajñāpāramitā-śāstra* (*MPP-śāstra*) 大智度論, many of which are derived from this school. It is a well-known fact, also, that the Yogācāra School 瑜伽行派 borrowed many Sarvāstivādin concepts. Thus, the Mahāyāna and the Sarvāstivādin clearly have an intimate historical connection on doctrinal matters.

This relationship between Mahāyāna Buddhism and Nikāya Buddhism 部派佛教 is complicated, and it would be premature to conclude that the Mahāyāna is a development from the Mahāsāṁghika, simply because the latter advocated a number of progressive ideas. In this paper I propose to analyze the doctrinal relationship between Mahāyāna and Nikāya Buddhism and examine the institutional aspect of the early Mahāyāna Saṁgha as possible clues to the rise of Mahāyāna Buddhism. As a preliminary I wish to point out a number of significant ideas common to both the Mahāyāna and the Mahāsāṁghika.

The *Samayabhedoparacanacakra-śāstra*[1] 異部宗輪論 introduces several Mahāsāṁghika ideas which show a distinct similarity to the Mahāyāna doctrines. First, the Mahāsāṁghika held advanced ideas on the concept of Buddhahood. They advocated that the Buddhas are free of sāsravadharma 有漏法 and are eternal in body and life. This approaches the concept of Sambhoga-kāya 報身佛 in the Mahāyāna. Second, they believed that the Buddha preached a

single message with one voice 一音, an idea inherited by such Mahāyāna texts as the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa*[2] 維摩經, which became influential in later Chinese Buddhist thought. Third, they developed the ideal of Bodhisattva who, desiring to save humanity, is born of free will into the lower realm of durgati 悪趣. In early Buddhist and Sarvāstivādin literature the Bodhisattva referred to the previous lives of the Buddha, and, in its narrower usage, to the life of Śākyamuni prior to his enlightenment. The Sarvāstivādin also taught that the Bodhisattva was subject to the law of karma. If one attained arhathood, he was free of the karmic law; and once the arhat died, he entered nirvāṇa never to return to the world of saṁsāra. But living in the cycle of saṁsāra, the Bodhisattva was bound to the law of karma. In contrast to this school the Mahāsāṁghika held that the Bodhisattva has already sundered karmic bondage and, therefore, is born in durgati out of his own free will, his deep vow (praṇidhāna) of salvation. The Bodhisattva already possesses the merits to attain Buddhahood, but in order to save sentient beings he purposefully declines perfection and remains a Buddha-to-be. This is close to the Mahāyāna ideal of the Bodhisattva. The term is not limited in use to the previous lives of the Buddha, for all men who establish the vow to achieve enlightenment and practice austerities are called Bodhisattvas. This ideal culminates in the "Bodhisattvas with great powers", such as Mañjuśri, Samantabhadra, and Maitreya, whose powers of salvation are identical with the Buddha. Fourth, the concept of daśabhūmi 十地 in the *Mahāvastu*[3] of the Lokottaravādin 說出世部, a branch of the Mahāsāṁghika, foreshadows the parallel concept in the *Daśabhūmika-sūtra*[4] 十地經, although the names of the ten stages differ. It must be noted that the *Mahāvastu* incorporated ideas from various traditions, and the daśabhūmi may also be a borrowing[5]. There is no textual evidence to show that the concept originated with the Lokottaravādin, but if it did, then the influence upon the Daśabhūmika-sūtra is very great, since the Mahāvastu is the oldest extant source which describes the stages of practice in this way.

I have briefly discussed the similarities between the Mahāsāṁghika and the Mahāyāna, but this alone is inadequate to conclude that the latter developed from the former. It is necessary to document the gradual shift in both ideas and institutions from the Mahāsāṁghika to the Mahāyāna. But this is almost impossible with the existing sources. If we speak of doctrinal similarities, we cannot merely stress the similarities existing between the two as historical evidence for the rise of Mahāyāna Buddhism, for the influence of such schools as the Sarvāstivādin has been in some cases undeniably great.

## Sarvāstivādin doctrines and Mahāyāna Buddhism

My purpose is not to compare the doctrines of the Sarvāstivādin and the Mahāyāna, but we must understand a few important relationships between the two.

TRIPIṬAKA 三藏. Nāgārjuna utilized a number of Sarvāstivādin doctrines; one

of these, the concept of Tripiṭaka, is a transmission of the Sarvāstivādin. He lists under the sūtra-piṭaka[6] 經藏: *Ekottara*, *Madhyama*, *Dīrgha*, and *Saṁyukta-āgama*. The *Kṣudrakapiṭaka* (*Khuddaka-nikāya*) 雜藏 is not listed which is characteristic of the Sarvāstivādin and the Mūlasarvāstivādin[7]. In contrast to this the council record of the Mahāsāṁghika School's *Mahāsāṁghika-vinaya*[8] 摩訶僧祇律 lists *Dīrgha*, *Madhyama*, *Saṁyukta*, *Ekottara*, and *Kṣudrakapiṭaka*. Thus, the Tripiṭaka studied by Nāgārjuna was that of the Sarvāstivādin and not the Mahāsāṁghika.

The vinaya system[9] included in the *MPP-śāstra*, also, coincides with the Sarvāstivādin *Daśabhāṇavāra-vinaya* 十誦律, but it differs completely from the *Mahāsāṁghika-v*. Nāgārjuna must have consulted the vinaya of the Sarvāstivādin rather than the Mahāsāṁghika. As for the abhidharma-pitaka[10] the *MPP-śāstra* lists the *Aṣṭagranthābhidharma* 八犍度阿毘曇, *Ṣaṭpādābhidharma* 六分阿毘曇, *Śāriputrābhidharma* 舍利弗阿毘曇, and *Peṭaka*[11] (*Pheḷā*) 蜫勒 (篋藏). The first two are Sarvāstivādin transmissions, and the third, according to Nāgārjuna, is a Vātsīputrīya transmission, but no traces of Vātsīputrīya doctrine can be found in the present *Śāriputrābhidharma*. Some Japanese scholars[12] consider this to be a Sarvāstivādin abhidharma, because of the similarity in doctrine, while others point out the likeness to the Mahāsāṁghika. The consensus opinion[13], however, is that its affiliation is impossible to determine. The only thing clear is that it has a system common with the Pali transmissions, *Vibhaṅga* and *Puggalapaññatti*, and is one of the older abhidharmas. The *Peṭaka* is thought to have some connections with the Theravadin *Peṭakopadesa*, but in terms of the contents this is unlikely. We may thus conclude that although Nāgārjuna was familiar with a variety of abhidharmas, the doctrines utilized in the *MPP-śāstra* are taken mainly from the Sarvāstivādin.

The main doctrinal principle in the *MPP-śāstra* is the 37 bodhipākṣika-dharmā 三十七道品, found in the āgama, but there are also many ideas of Sarvāstivādin origin: such as, the four āryasatya 16 anupaśyanā[14] 四諦十六行觀; the stages[15] of practice called uṣmagata 煖, mūrdhan 頂, kṣānti 忍, laukikāgradharma 世第一法; the stages of sundering kleśa, such as, the 8 kṣānti 八忍, 8 jñāna 八智, 9 ānantaryamārga 九無礙道, 9 vimuktimārga[16] 九解脫道; the classification of kleśa into the 88 bandhana[17] 八十八結, and 98 anuśaya[18] 九十八使; the enumeration of the 6 hetu[19] 六因 besides the 4 pratyaya 四緣; the listing of 10 jñāna[20]; and the adding of avijñaptirūpa[21] 無表色 to 5 indriya 五根 and 5 viṣaya 五境 to count 11 rūpa. This proves beyond doubt that the author of the *MPP-śāstra* was conversant in Sarvāstivādin doctrine.

DVĀDAŚAṄGA-DHARMAPRAVACANA[22] 十二部經. The dvādaśāṅga in the *MPP-śāstra* follows that of the Sarvāstivādin. Whether the teachings, Buddha-vacana, should be organized into the Navāṅga-buddhavacana 九分教 or Dvādaśāṅga-buddhaśāsana differs with the Nikāya schools. The Theravādin[23] 上座部 and the Mahāsāṁghika (in the *Mahāsāṁghika-v*)[24] use the navāṅga with a slight variation in the sequence. In contrast to this the dvādaśāṅga is employed by the Sarvāstivādin, Mahīśāsaka 化地部 (in the *Pañcavargika-v.*[26] 五分律),

Dharmaguptaka 法藏部 (in the *Caturvargika-v.*[27] 四分律), and the Mūlasarvāstivādin[28]. The sequence in the dvādaśāṅga differs with the schools; therefore, the lineage of a particular text can be inferred by studying the type of navāṅga or dvādaśāṅga used.

The majority of the Mahāyāna texts utilize the dvādaśāṅga and very few the navāṅga. And many texts carry the Sarvāstivādin sequence of the dvādaśāṅga. In the *Mahāvibhāṣā-sāstra*[29] 大毘婆沙論, a representative work of the Sarvāstivādin, the dvādaśāṅga is listed, as follows: 1. sūtra, 2. geya, 3. vyākaraṇa, 4. gāthā, 5. udāna, 6. nidāna, 7. avadāna, 8. itivṛttaka, 9, jātaka, 10. vaipulya, 11. adbhūtadharma, 12. upadeśa. The characteristic feature of this sequence is that the avadāna is seventh. The Chinese translation of the *Saṁyuktāgama*[30] 雜阿含 has the same order and is thought to be of identical transmission. The following Mahāyāna sūtras also have the same sequence: the Chinese translation[31] of the *Pañcaviṁśati-sāhasrikā-prajñā-pāramitā-sūtra* (Chinese *PPP*) 大品般若, *Saṁdhinirmocana-sūtra*[32] 解深密經 *Mahāyāna-mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*[33] 大乘涅槃經, *Mahāsaṁnipāta-sūtra*[34] 大集經, *Mahākaruṇā-sūtra*[35] 大悲經, *Kuśalamūlasaṁgraha*[36] 華手經, *MPP-śāstra*[37], *Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra*[38] 瑜伽論, *Prakaraṇāryavācā-śāstra*[39] 顯揚聖教論, *Mahāyānābhidharma-samuccaya-vyākhyā*[40] 大乘阿毘達磨集論, and *Mahāvyutpatti*[41]. The *Satyasiddhi-śāstra*[42] 成實論, while not a Sarvāstivādin text, is influenced by it and contains the same order of the dvādaśāṅga. In the *Pañcavargika-v.*[43] of the Mahīśāsaka the dvādaśāṅga is listed, as follows: 1. sūtra, 2. geya, 3. vyākaraṇa, 4. gāthā, 5. udāna, 6. nidāna, 7. itivṛttaka, 8. jātaka, 9. vaipulya, 10. adbhūtadharma, 11. avadāna, 12. upadeśa. The *Mūlasarvāstivāda-kṣudrakavastu*[44] 根本說一切有部毘奈耶雜事 maintains the same order, showing that the Mūlasarvāstivādin and the Mahīśāsaka belong to the same tradition. It contains many ideas common to the Sarvāstivādin, but the dvādaśāṅga sequence is different. Among the Mahāyāna texts the *Mahā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*[45] (*MPP-sūtra*) 大般若波羅蜜多經 contains the same dvādaśāṅga in the first section 初品, volumes 3 and 127; second section, volume 402; and third section, volume 479. The fact that the Chinese *PPP* belongs to the Sarvāstivādin tradition, whereas the *MPP-sūtra* belongs to the Mahīśāsaka and the Mūlasarvāstivādin is worthy of notice. The *Buddhāvataṁsaka*[46] 華嚴經 also enumerates the same dvādaśāṅga; the only difference being that nidāna is fifth and udāna is sixth in order. Since all the dvādaśāṅga sources list udāna in fifth place, some confusion must have entered to invert the order of udāna and nidāna.

In the Dharmaguptaka *Caturvargika-v.*[47] and Chinese *Dīrgha-āgama*[48] the sequence is, as follows: 1. sūtra, 2. geya, 3. vyākaraṇa, 4. gāthā, 5. udāna, 6. nidāna, 7. jātaka, 8. itivṛttaka, 9. vaipulya, 10. adbhūtadharma, 11. avadāna, 12. upadeśa. This is similar to the Mahīśāsaka order, except for the seventh, jātaka, and eighth, itivṛttaka. The inverted order is characteristic of the Dharmaguptaka dvādaśāṅga. Another Mahāyāna sūtra in the same tradition is the Chinese 光讚般若[49], which is identical in contents with the Chineses *PPP* and the *MPP-sūtra*, 第二會・第三會, but the sequence differs. This reflects the varied back-

grounds of Buddhist knowledge held by the peoples responsible in transmitting the prajñāpāramitā literature. The dvādaśāṅga in the Sanskrit *Pañcaviṁśatisāhasrikā-PP*,[50] edited by N. Dutt, is identical with the Chinese *PPP* and belongs to the Mahīśāsaka tradition.

The preceding examination leads us to the conclusion that there are several different types of dvādaśāṅga sequence, but it is the Sarvāstivādin which is predominant in Mahāyāna sūtras and śāstras. It is proof that the authors of the Mahāyāna texts were versed in Sarvāstivādin doctrine.

NAVĀṄGA-BUDDHAVACANA 九分教. The *Mahāsāṁghika-v.*[51] lists the navāṅga in the following order: 1. sūtra, 2. geya, 3. vyākaraṇa, 4. gāthā, 5. udāna, 6. ityuktaka (or itivṛttaka), 7. jātaka, 8. vaipulya, 9. adbhūtadharma. It is well-known that the Theravādin[52] describes the Buddha-vacana by the navāṅga, but the sequence differs slightly with numbers 8 and 9 being abbhūtadhamma and vedalla, respectively. In contrast to the Mahāsāṁghika use of navāṅga the Mahāyāna uses the dvādaśāṅga generally; from this viewpoint the Mahāsāṁghika has little to do with the Mahāyāna. Some scholars consider the Chinese *Ekottara-āgama* 增一阿含 to be a Mahāsāṁghika transmission, but this is doubtful, because it lists the dvādaśāṇga[53] rather than the navāṇga; in fact, the dvādaśāṇga occurs in five places, but the sequence is varied and none is identical with those in the Mahāyāna texts.

Among Mahāyāna works which contain the navāṅga, there are the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-sūtra*[55] 法華經, *Mahāyāna-mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*[54] 大乘涅槃經, and *Daśabhūmika-vibhāṣā*[56] 十住毘婆沙論.. The navāṅga in the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* is identical with the one in the *Mahāsāṁghika-v.*, but it is cited for the purpose of criticism. The navāṅga[54] represents Hīnayāna Buddhism and is belittled as the incomplete teaching, ardha-vacana 半字; the dvādaśāṅga on the other hand fully expresses the complete teachings of the Buddha. The author was aware that the navāṅga belonged to a different tradition from that of his own Mahāyāna, and interestingly this navāṅga is the one found in the *Mahāsāṁghika-v.*

The navāṅga-śāsana 九部法 in the *Saddharma-puṇḍarīka*[55] is famous, but it differs in both contents and order from the one in the Pali, *Mahāsāṁghika-v.*, etc. It is formed by eliminating vyākaraṇa, udāna, and vaipulya from the dvādaśāṅga, and by replacing avadāna by aupamya. This also is given to describe the Hīnayāna. The navāṅga in the *Daśabhūmika-vibhāṣā*[56] again differs from the Pali version; it eliminates jātaka and interpolates nidāna. The author probably explained the navāṅga, while fully acquainted with the dvādaśāṅga. This sequence is not found elsewhere and its lineage is difficult to determine. This work, however, teaches the Vātsīputrīya theory of pañcadharmakoṣa[57] 五法藏 in five places, so it must have had some connections with the Vātsīputrīya. The *MPP-sūtra*[58] also teaches the pañcadharma-koṣa. It is interesting to note that while the *MPP-śāstra*, *Abhidharmakoṣa-bhāṣya Satyasiddhi*, etc., treat the Vātsīputrīya theory negatively, the *Daśabhūmika-vibhāṣā* and *MPP-sūtra* treat it positively. The *Daśabhūmika-vibhāṣā* divides kleśa into 10 and further

teaches the 98 anuśaya[59] 九十八使.. This coincides with Sarvāstivādin doctrine, but others do not; such as, the 14 types of paryavasthāna[80] 纏, analyzed into tri-dhātu, darśanamārga, and bhāvanāmārga, and listing 198 paryavasthāna 纏垢.. Another is the 298 kleśa 煩惱, combining 98 anuśaya and 198 paryavasthāna, which is similar to the 294 kleśa[61] 惑 discussed in the Sāmmitīya 正量部 work 律二十二明了論[62]. The Sāmmitīya and Vātsīputrīya are closely related schools. Still another is the 700 asamprayuktadharma[63] 不相應法 and 65 types[64] of dhyāna 禪.. It is important to note* that while the author of *MPP-śāstra* utilizes the Sarvāstivādin doctrines only, the same author refers to doctrines of other schools in his *Daśabhūmika-vibhāṣā*.

DAŚABHŪMI[65] 十地.. The daśabhūmi theory first appears in the *Mahāvastu*,[66] which leads us to believe that it is closely connected with the Mahāsāṁghika. But this does not mean that the theory was not taught in other schools, because it is found in such sūtras[67] as the following: 修行本起經, 過去現在因果經, 太子瑞應本起經, and 大方廣莊嚴經.. These contain the biography of the Buddha, and although the names of the daśabhūmi are not given, proper emphasis is made upon the necessity of progressing through the ten stages in order to attain ekajātipratibaddha 一生補處.. The *Mahāvastu* shows an advanced stage in the daśabhūmi theory, since it is discussed not only in reference to Śākya-bodhisattva but also to Bodhisattvas in general. Therefore, we may interpret the *Mahāvastu* daśabhūmi as inheriting the theory developed in the biographical sūtras. There is a considerable difference in the names of the daśabhūmi between the *Daśabhūmika-sūtra* and *Mahāmstu*, and in the *Buddhāvataṁsaka* the daśa-vyavasthāna 十住, rather than daśabhūmi, correspond closely to the *Mahāvastu* daśabhūmi. The comparative table of the ten stages found in the three texts, are, as follows:

| Daśabhūmi[68] | Daśa-vyavasthāna[69] | *Mahāvastu*[70] |
|---|---|---|
| 1. pramuditā | 1. prathamacittotpādika | 1. durāroha |
| 2. vimalā | 2. ādikarmika | 2. baddhamānā |
| 3. pravākari | 3. yogācāra | 3. puṣpamaṇḍitā |
| 4. arciṣmatī | 4. *janmaja* | 4. rucirā |
| 5. sudurjayā | 5. pūrvayogasampanna | 5. cittavistarā |
| 6. abhimukhī | 6. śuddhādhyāśaya | 6. rūpavatī |
| 7. dūraṅgamā | 7. avivarta | 7. durjayā |
| 8. acalā | 8. kumārabhūta | 8. *janmanideśa* |
| 9. sādhumatī | 9. *yauvarājya* | 9. *yauvarājyatā* |
| 10. dharmameghā | 10. *abhiṣikta* | 10. *abhiṣekatā* |

Among the ten stages of the types listed, some are found in other ṣūtras. The *MPP-sūtra*[71] establishes four progressive stages in the Bodhisattva's practice: namely, 初發意菩薩 prathamacittopadika-bodhisattva, 行六波羅蜜菩薩, 不退轉菩薩, avinivartanīya-bodhisattva, and 一生補處菩薩 ekajātipratibaddha-bodhisattva or abhiṣikta. Some of these names match those in the daśa-

vyavasthāna. The same can be said of the stages found in 自誓三昧經[72] namely, 童眞 kumārabhūta, 了生 yauvarājya?, and 阿惟顏 abhiṣikta. Scholars advocate that the daśa-vyāvasthāna is older than the daśabhūmi. Even if the *Mahāvastu* daśabhūmi is the oldest, the *Buddhāvataṁsaka* daśa-vyavasthāna, while influenced by the *Mahāvastu*, was developed by unifying the idea of the four types of bodbhisattva in the *MPP-sūtra* and other theories. The daśa-vyavasthāna is not a simple copy of the *Mahāvastu*, and the daśabhūmi of the *Daśabhūmika-sūtra* must have developed from this at a later date. The daśa-vyavasthāna describes the stages of bodhisattva practice beginning with prathamacittotpāda and concluding with abhiṣikta; but the daśabhūmi begins with the gaining of faith in pramuditā 歡喜地, progresses to mastering the precepts in vimalā 離垢地, and so on through the ten stages. The organization of the ten stages differ radically from each other. Consequently, although the three above have the common characteristic of the ten stages, it alone would not warrant a mechanical transformation from the *Mahāvastu* to the *Daśabhūmika-sūtra*.

THE GENERAL DAŚABHŪMI 共の十地. The daśabhūmi and the daśavyavasthāna described above apply to the bodhisattva and have nothing to do with the śrāvaka, but there is another theory of the daśabhūmi which includes the stages of the śrāvaka. This appears in the *MPP-sūtra*. The two types of daśabhūmi are discussed in the Chinese *PPP* 大品般若, 發趣品. The first type[73] is exposited in terms of first stage, second stage, etc., without the descriptive names for each stage. The *MPP-śāstra*[74] interprets this daśabhūmi to be identical with the one in the *Daśabhūmika-s*, but actually it is closer to the daśa-vyavasthāna theory. It is probable that this was taught with the daśa-vyavasthāna in mind, but as the daśabhūmi theory gained a higher status this was interpreted by the daśabhūmi, rather than the daśa-vyayasthāna. The *MPP-sūtra*,[75] which is a compilation of a later date, also contains a daśabhūmi identical to the one in the *Daśabhūmika-s*.

In contrast to the first type, described traditionally as the special daśabhūmi 不共の十地, the second type is known as the general daśạbhūmi 共の十地. This[76] contains the following stages: 1. śuklavidarśana-bh. 乾慧地, 2. gotra-bh. 性地, 3. aṣṭamaka-bh. 八人地, 4. darśana-bh. 見地, 5. tanū-bh. 薄地, 6. vītarāga-bh. 離欲地, 7. kṛtāvī-bh. 已作地, 8. pratyekabuddha-bh. 辟支佛地, 9. bodhisattva-bh. 菩薩地, 10. Buddha-bh. 佛地. This daśabhūmi type must have been formulated by Mahāyāna Buddhists, but the materials which form its basis are found in the treatises of Nikāya Buddhists, since they pursued the stages of practice in a similar way. For example, in the *Mahāvibhāṣā-śāstra*,[77] we find that Ghoṣaka 妙音 taught the four stages of tanū-bh., vītarāga-bh., aśaikṣa-bh. 無學地, and bhūmi-phala 地果. The first three correspond to stages 5, 6, and 7, respectively, of the above, and bhūmi-phala refers to nirvāṇa. The *Mahāvibhāṣā*[78] reports also that Kātyāyanīputra 迦多衍尼子 taught six stages, as follows: bhāvanā-bh? 修行地, darśana-bh. 見地, tanū-bh., vītarāga-bh., aśaikṣa-bh, and bhūmi-phala. The bhāvanā-bh. seems to be the stage prior to the division into stages 1, 2, and 3 above; darśana-bh. to aśaikṣa-bh. correspond to stages 4, 5, 6, and 7, respectively. These seven stages cover the steps in śrāvaka-yāna; and the addition of

pratyekabuddha-bh., bodhisattva-bh., and Buddha-bh. leads to the formation of ten stages.

In the *Vinayamātṛkā-śāstra*[79] 毘尼母經 the following are found as gotra-bh. 種姓地: aṣtamaka-bh. 四向四果第八地, darśana-bh. 諦地, tanū-bh., vīṭarāga-bh., and kṛṭāvī-bh. Besides these the pratyekabuddha-bh. is also given. The same work[80] lists the following as a separate theory: aśubhasaṁjñā-bh. 白骨觀地, aṣṭamaka-bh. 八人地, tanū-bh., vītarāga-bh., and kṛṭāvī-bh. This śāstra is considered by some scholars to be of Haimavata transmission, but this is not possible; since the contents of the *Vinayamātṛkā* matches that of the *Caturvargika-v.* on many points, many Japanese scholars see this as a Dharmaguptaka transmission.

The Sarvāstivādin *Daśabhāṇavāra-v.*[81] enumerates the types of enlightenment, some of which are identical with the names of the daśabhūmi: uṣmagata 暖法者, mūrdhan 頂法者, kṣānti 順道忍法者, tanū 三毒薄者, vītarāga 離欲者, laukikā-gradharma 世間第一法者, srotāpanna 須陀洹果, sakridāgāmin 斯陀含果, anāgāmin 阿那含果, śrāvakayāna 聲聞乘, pratyekabuddha-yāna 辟支佛乘, and Buddha-yāna 佛乘.

It is not possible to state definitively that the sources of Nikāya Buddhism discussed above are all older than the *MPP-sūtra*, but they may be so considered, because if the Nikāya Buddhists had known the daśabhūmi of the completed prajñā-pāramitā literature, they would probably have formulated a more well-organized daśa-bhūmi theory of their own. The authors of the prajñā-pāramitā texts most likely organized the general daśabhūmi theory, referring to these incomplete bhūmi ideas. In this case, also, both the *Mahāvibhāṣā* and the *Daśabhānavāra-v.* are Sarvāstivādin literature, and if the *Vinayamātṛkā* belongs to the Dharmaguptaka, we cannot imagine the Mahāsāṁghika influencing the formation of the Mahāyāna theory of the general daśabhūmi.

SIX PĀRAMITĀ 六波羅蜜. We will next consider the six pāramitā, which also appears in the *Mahāvibhāṣā*. In contrast to the orthodox Sarvāstivādin[82] of Kaśmīr, which taught four pāramitā; namely, dāna 施, śīla 戒, vīrya 精進, and prajñā 般若, the Bahirdeṣika[83] 外國師 added kṣānti 忍 and dhyāna 禪 to advocate the six pāramitā. Bahirdeṣika refers to the progressive Gandhāra Sarvāstivādin, who taught the six pāramitā in conjunction with the practices leading to the enlightenment of Śākya-bodhisattva himself. In the prajñā-pāramitā literature this was elevated into the universal practice of all bodhisattvas which is clearly a leap in the development of thought. Since the six pāramitā is also found in the *Mahāvastu*,[84] it is difficult to determine the chronological relationship between it and the *Mahāvibhāṣā*.

When we compare the *Vijñaptimātratā-siddhi* 唯識三十頌 and the *Abhidharmakoṣa-bhāṣya* 阿毘達磨俱舍論, we notice a close similarity between the classification of elements into citta 心, caitasika 心所, cittaviprayukta 心不相應行, rūpa 色, and asaṁskrta 無爲, in the former and the classification of rūpa, citta, caitasika, citta-viprayukta, asaṁskṛta in the latter. It is to be noted that the general outline of the *Abhidharmakoṣa* was already formulated in the *Mahāvibhāṣā*.

In the preceding discussion I have shown that although the Mahāsāṁghika

shares a number of ideas with the Mahāyāna, the Sarvāstivādin doctrines have been equally influential. Since other schools also have connections with the Mahāyāna, it would be premature to draw the conclusion, based only on similarity of doctrines, that it had its beginning in a particular school. Since such a treatment of the subject can only be inadequate, I propose to inquire into the institutional aspect of the early Mahāyāna Saṁgha and, coupled with an analysis of doctrinal history, shed light upon the origin of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

## Kulaputra and kuladuhitṛ as supporters of Mahāyāna Buddhism

We now turn our attention to another type of Mahāyāna follower besides the Bodhisattva known as kulaputra 善男子 and kuladuhitṛ 善女人. When the authors of the Mahāyāna texts address the audience, they use these terms. For example, the *MPP-sūtra*[85] which discusses the four types of Bodhisattva states:

> "O Bhagavan, if the kulaputra or the kuladuhitā rejoices at the virtues (puṇya) of the prathamacittotpada-bodhisattva 初發意菩薩, how great would be the blessings to be gained."

In some cases those who uphold and read the *MPP-sūtra*[86] are regarded as kulaputra and kuladuhitr:

> "If there is a kulaputrā or a kuladuhitā who worships and recites the prajñā-pāramitā and practices according to the teaching, then he will be protected from māra, māradeva 魔天, amanuṣya 非人, et el., and he will not meet a tragic death."

In the *Sukhāvatī-vyūha-sütra*[87] 阿彌陀經 the object of the sermon is again the kulaputra and the kuladuhitr:

> "O Śāriputra, if there is a kulaputra or a kuladuhitā who shall hear the name of the blessed Amitāyus, the Tathāgata, and having heard it, shall keep it in mind, and with thoughts undisturbed shall keep it in mind for one, two, three, four, five, six, or seven nights when that kulaputrā or kuladuhitā comes to die, then that Amitāyus, the Tathāgata, surrounded by śrāvakasaṁgha and followed by bodhisattvagaṇa will stand before them at their hour of death."

Again in the *Saddharma-puṇḍarīkā*[88] the worshippers of the sūtra are known as kulaputra and kuladuhitṛ:

> "O Bhaiṣajyarāja, if there be a kulaputra or a kuladuhitā who worships this teaching, even unto one verse, and rejoices O Bhaiṣajyarāja, I promise them all that they will attain anuttarā saṁyaksambodhi."

Since the Mahāyāna sūtras are compiled as the sermons of Sākyamuni, the opening line states the composition of the audience, such as, the four classes of bhikṣu 比丘, bhikṣuṇī 比丘尼, upāsaka 優婆塞, upāsikā 優婆夷, the eight groups of deva and nāga 天龍八部, and various bodhisattvas. As a historical fact, the sermons of Śākyamuni were heard by the bhikṣu, bhikṣuṇī, upāsaka, and upāsikā; therefore, they could not be excluded in listing the congregation of the Mahāyāna sūtras. It would be wrong, however, to think that the authors of these sūtras wrote for the bhikṣu and bhikṣuṇī, because the actual audience was the bodhisattva, people who were called kulaputra and kuladuhitṛ. This has been illustrated by the quotations cited above, but a study of the scriptural contents would make this even clearer.

The kulaputra and kuladuhitṛ who have such important roles in the Mahāyāna works are not regarded highly in the Āgama and completely neglected in the abhidharma writings. In the early Saṁgha the lay followers were called upāsaka and upāsikā, and the priesthood included the bhikṣu and bhikṣuṇī, as well as śikṣamāṇā, śrāmaṇera, and śrāmaṇerikā. Upāsaka means "those who serve" and bhikṣu means "those who beg", especially, "those who beg for food." Thus, upāsaka and upāsikā are householders who not only follow the teachings of the Buddha, but who have as their duty the service to the bhikṣu and bhikṣuṇī. Service means to offer the four items necessary for existence: clothing, shelter, food, and medicine. In the double structure of the upāsaka and upāsikā, those who serve, and bhikṣu and bhikṣuṇī, those who beg, the early Buddhist Saṁgha was formed, and this structure remained without any significant change among the Nikāya Buddhists who inherited the traditions of the early Saṁgha. It was only natural that among these people the terms, kulaputra and kuladuhitṛ, which fail to distinguish between the priesthood and the lay followere, were not used.

Kulaputra and kuladuhitṛ simply mean the children of good families. Originally, it had no special Buddhist connotation; for example, as it was used in the Āgama[89]:

> "The Brāhmaṇa youth, Ambaṭṭha, is a kulaputta. The youth Ambaṭṭha is of good birth (sujāti)."
> "In Bārānasī there is a kulaputta, son of a wealthy man, (seṭṭhiputta), called Yasa. His body is soft and supple."[90]

Iu the former quotation the kulaputta refers to a non-Buddhist youth, and in the latter, it describes the youth Yasa before he was converted by the Buddha at mṛgadava. They have no Buddhist connotation, but a gradual transformation occurs in the following passage[91]:

> "The reason that the kulaputra shaves the beard and hair, wears the kaṣāya robe, abandons the householder's life based upon right faith, and practices austerities is to pursue the unsurpassed brahmacaryä and gain enlightenment."

In this quotation nothing more is said than that young men of good families entered the Saṁgha, but as this pattern became stable due to repetition in the Āgama, the term kulaputra began to be used as a synonym for Buddhist. But it was still not clear whether it referred to a householder Buddhist (laymen) or a renunciant Buddhist (bhikṣu). For this reason the Āgama does not contain too many references to kulaputra and kuladuhitṛ. Compared to the Pali Nikāya, the Chinese Āgama contains more examples of kulaputra, and the use of kuladuhitṛ in the Pali[92] is especially rare.

As shown above the terms kulaputra and kuladuhitṛ did not develop in the Āgama to mean explicitly a Buddhist. In the abhidharma texts it is not even considered. But these very terms were used by Mahāyāna writers to describe their followers. This means that the Mahāyāna adherents were composed of an entirely different group of people from the Nikāya Buddhists. If they were drawn from the same following, the Mahāyānists would have used the traditional terms, whether bhikṣu, bhikṣuṇī, upāsaka, upāsikā, etc. In fact this would have been more convenient. Yet the point is that the new Saṁgha utilized the terms, bodhisattva and kulaputra, which had never been fully developed in the Āgama, suggesting that a different historical development took place besides the orthodox Saṁgha. The characteristic of such terms as bodhisattva and kulaputra is that they make no distinction between the lay and priesthood which is also one of the significant features of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

## Daśakuśalakarmapathāḥ as the śīla of early Mahāyāna Buddhists

According to I-ching's 南海寄歸內法傳[93] it states:

> "The Buddhists of North India follow Hīnayāna Buddhism exclusively, but in other parts of India the distinction between Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna is not clear. Both the people of Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna observe the prātimokṣa according to the vinaya. And they also practice the Four Āryasatya 四聖諦. The only thing is that those who worship the bodhisattvas and recite the Mahāyāna sūtras are called Mahāyāna, and those who do not are called Hīnayāna."

This lack of distinction between Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna must have been the general situation of the Saṁgha when I-ching 義淨 (635–713) visited India in the latter part of the seventh century. However, this practice of Mahāyāna Boddhists receiving the upasaṁpadā according to the vinaya and observing the prātimokṣa is already mentioned in the *Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra, Bodhisattvabhūmi,* 菩薩地.

The *Bodhisattvabhūmi*[94] teaches the trividhāni śuddhasaṁvarāṇi (trividhāḥ śīlaskandhāḥ) 三聚淨戒, which must be upheld by the bodhisattva. The first of these is saṁvaraśīla 律儀戒, which is said to be identical with the śrāvaka śīla.

When the *Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra* was compiled, therefore, even the bodhisattva was ordained by the rules of the vinaya, receiving upasaṁpadā and observing prātimokṣa (250 śikṣāpadāni[95]) together with the śrāvakayāna bhikṣu. But the bodhisattva also upheld the kuśaladharmasaṁgrāhakaśīla 攝善法戒 and the sattvārthakriyā-śīla 饒益有情戒, distinguishing him from the bhikṣu.

At any rate if the bodhisattva observed the prātimokṣa of the vinaya-piṭaka, his daily routine did not differ basically from that of the śrāvakayāna bhikṣu. This is verified in the *MPP-śāstra*, which is a earlier than the *Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra* of the fourth century. The *MPP-śāstra*[96] states that even in the case of the bodhisattva the renunciant bodhisattva is superior to the householder bodhisattva, and it describes[97] the four types of saṁvara of the renunciant (pravrajita), as follows: 1, śrāmaṇera, śrāmaṇerikā (daśa-śikṣāpadāni), 2. śikṣamāṇā (ṣaḍdharma), 3. bhikṣu (approximately 250 śikṣāpadāni), 4. bhikṣuṇī (approximately 500 śikṣāpadāni), and then proceeds to explain initiation (pravrajyā) and ordination (upasaṁpadā). Although the passage does not explicitly say so, this may be interpreted as the process by which the bodhisattva renounces the worldly life. The passage occurs in "The section which praises the meaning of the śīla-pāramitā in the first chapter", but there is another, "The section commenting upon the Mahāyāna," which discusses thoroughly the six pāramitā of the Chinese *PPP*, and here śīla is explained[98] as the daśakuśalakarmapathāḥ 十善業道. Consequently, there is a contradiction between these two theories of śīlapāramitā in this work, but since the śīla-pāramitā is explained as daśakuśala in the Chinese *PPP*, an interpretation along this line would be orthodox.

It is believed that additions[99] have been made to the *MPP-śāstra* by the translator Kumārjīva, and the first interpretation may be his. Although the *Daśabhūmika-vibhāṣā* and the *MPP-śāstra* are considered to be by the same author, contradictions in ideas exist between the two, for this reason it is doubtful[100] whether the translation was faithful to the original. A certain scholar believes that the *MPP-śāstra* was compiled in China by Kumārajīva, but this is an extreme view, since it is difficult to imagine that such a voluminous text, rich with citations from various sūtras and doctrines, could have been written in fourth century China with the rather poor selection of Buddhist literature available at the time.

If we accept the *MPP-śāstra* as an authentic work of Nāgārjuna (150–250), then we know that the Mahāyāna Buddhists of his time had already utilized the vinaya-piṭaka and upheld the śrāvaka śīla, since it teaches the upasaṁpadā ordination. This, however, is doubtful as discussed above as far as available sources are concerned, and, as I shall demonstrate below, it is wrong to assume they followed the vinaya-piṭaka from the earliest beginnings of the Mahāyāna Saṁgha.

In order to determine the nature of discipline 戒律 of the early Mahāyānists, it is important to clarify the contents of śīla-pāramitā, the second of six pāramitā, and vimalā-bhūmi, the second of daśabhūmi. In the daśabhūmi the first stage is called pramuditā 歡喜地, which describes its essential nature, because the practitioner gains joy in acquiring true faith (śraddhā) in Mahāyāna teachings. After

this unshakable faith is established, he then proceeds to vimalā-bhūmi in which he practices the austerities based upon resolute faith. Vimalā means to depart from the impurities within self, and the central concern is śīla, since the austerities are based upon the commitment to śīla. In explaining śīla in both vimalā-bhūmi and śīla-pāramitā the daśakuśala is used.

The discussion of six pāramitā in the prajñā-pāramitā literature is the most important, and in the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā-PP*[101] 小品般若 is taught in the *Avinivartanīyavarga* 不退轉品 (阿惟越致品). Its first Chinese translation 道行般若, being an old rendition, is inadequately translated and daśakuśala is rendered 十戒. Errors also seem to have entered the translation of the explanation of this term, but it is clear that the original is daśakuśala in comparing this work with other translations of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā*. In the Chinese texts belonging to the same lineage the six pāramitā is always explained in the *Avinirvartanīyavarga* where śīla is interpreted by means of daśakuśala. In the *PPP* lineage the chapter treating the six pāramitā is not uniform; for example, 僧那僧涅品 in the 放光般若[102], 無縛品 in the 光讚般若[103], 問乘品 in the 大品般若[104], 三摩地品 in the 大般若波羅蜜多經第二會[105], but in every case śīla-pāramitā is explained by daśakuśala and all versions agree in the contents.

The daśakuśala is taught in the Āgama[106] in a generally fixed order, as follows: pāṇātipātā vermaṇī 不殺生, adinnādānā veramaṇī 不偷盜, kāmesu micchācārā veramaṇī 不邪婬 pisuṇāya vācāya veramaṇī 不兩舌, pharusāya vācāya vermaṇī 不惡口, musāvādā vermaṇī 不妄語, samphappalāpā vermaṇī 不綺語, anabhijjhā 不貪欲, avyāpāda 不瞋恚, and sammādhiṭṭhi 不邪見. In the *MPP-sūtras* the daśakuśala is discussed in the following manner:

> "The bodhisattvas teach sentient beings and gives them daśakuśalakarmapathān; they themselves practice the daśakuśalakarmapathān and make others practice them. They themselves practice pāṇātinātā vermaṇī and make others practice it, etc."

Each of the ten items are repeated in the same way, and the characteristic feature of Mahāyāna Buddḥism is expressed in encouraging others, as well as self, to practice the daśakuśala.

The *MPP-sūtras* from the oldest to the newest translations agree in explaining śīla-pāramitā by the daśakuśala; we can therefore conclude that this was a constant practice since the earliest prajñā-pāramitā sūtra.

Next, the *Daśabhūmika-s.* states that the śīla to be upheld by the bodhisattva of vimalā-bhūmi is the daśakuśala, a point on which all sources[107] of the text are in agreement. In the vimalā-bhūmi, also, daśakuśala is the only śīla taught. It begins with presenting saṁvaraśīla 律儀戒, and then goes on to explaine the virtuous functions of daśakuśala in the kuśaladharmasaṁgrāhaka-śīla 攝善法戒, and finally it states that those who do not observe the daśakuśala will fall into the durgati of naraka 地獄, preta 餓鬼, and tiryagyoni 畜生, and thence even if reborn into human life will undergo sufferings. Therefore, if one wishes to be

freed from saṁsāra and gain nirvāṇa, one must observe the daśakuśala. This is sattvārthakriyā-śīla 攝衆生戒. Although these three explanations of daśakuśala exist in the vimalā-bhūmi of the *Daśabhūmika-s.*, they are not described under the preceding names. It was the *Daśabhūmi-vyākhyāna*[108] 十地經論, the commentary to the sūtra, that first clarified these three forms as the trividhāni śuddhasaṁvarāṇi. The *Daśabhūmika-vibhāṣā*[109] also explains the vimalā-bhūmi which contains a detailed explanation of the daśakuśala. And in the *Buddhāvataṁsaka Daśa-pārināmanā*[110] 十廻向品 the term, trividhāni śuddhasaṁvarāṇi, is used, reflecting the acquaintance with this word in the *Avataṁsaka*.

The daśakuśala is an important doctrine found in various parts of the Āgama, but it is also seen in the *Mānava Dharmaśāstra*[111] and the *Mahābhārata*.[112] The daśakuśala which was so highly regarded by the early Mahāyānists was never held to be important by the Nikāya followers. The latter gave the pañca śīlāni 五戒 and the atthaṅgika uposatha 八齋戒 to the upāsaka and upāsikā; the daśaśikṣāpadāni to the śrāmaṇera and śrāmaṇerikā; the ṣaḍ-dharma to the śikṣamāṇā; and the upasaṁpadā to the bhikṣu and bhikṣuṇī; therefore, there was no room for the daśakuśala to enter the śrāvakayāna śīla. It is not clear why the Nikāya Buddhists neglected the daśakuśala, but the reason probably is that it was a śīla common to both the laity and priesthood. The characteristic of Nikāya Buddhism is the sharp distinction between the two; therefore, such a śīla would not have been welcomed.

The daśakuśala was originally a śīla for the laymen. The third daśakuśala is kāmesu micchācārā veramaṇī 不邪婬, prohibiting unethical sexual relationships, and is identical in contents with the third of the pañca śīlāni. The renunciant bodhisattva, however, changed this to brahmacaryā 梵行, transforming the daśakuśala into a śīla for the priesthood. It includes every ethical conduct important for human existence; consequently, it is an ideal śīla to be observed by the priesthood and laity alike. The fact that the early Mahāyānists utilized this leads us to conclude that a distinction was not made between the two. If a distinction had existed, a separate śīla would have been established for each group. This lack of distinction is evident in the sculptures of the bhodhisattvas who are invariably clothed in lay garb. Mahāyāna Buddhism arose from the laity without doubt, but this is not to exclude the existence of renunciant bodhisattvas among them. Bodhisattvas who were called bhikṣus were known, such as, Dharmākara-bhikṣu 法藏比丘 of the *Sukhāvatīvyūha-s.* and many such bodhisattvas who had renounced the worldly life are mentioned in various Mahāyāna sūtras. They must have devoted their life to the mastering of the śīla, but it is believed that there did not exist a distinction between the householder and renunciant bodhisattva. If the renunciant bodhisattva were considered superior to the lay bodhisattva, sūtras such as the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa* 維摩經, which advocates the excellence of a lay Buddhist, gṛhapati, over Mañjuśrī bodhisattva, would not have been compiled.

In later ages, however, the gap between the renunciant bodhisattva and lay

bodhisattva increased with the former showing distinct signs of superiority to the latter, and finally reaching the point of the renunciant bodhisatta receiving upasaṁpadā identically with the śrāvakayāna bhikṣu. But it was not that an opposing tendency did not exist. In Śāntideva's *Sikṣāsamuccaya* there are ten quotations from the *Bodhisattvaprātimokṣa*[113] and also quotations from the *Bodhisattvavinaya*[114] which lead us to believe that in Mahāyāna Buddhism a prātimokṣa distinctly of bodhisattva origin had been made. Since the quotations in the *Sikṣusamuccaya* are brief, it is difficult to assess the contents of the *Bodhisattvaprātimokṣa*. Another work, the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*,[115] frequently makes comment upon the bodhisattva śikṣā. In examining the *Bodhisattvaprātimokṣa-sūtra*,[116] edited by N. Dutt, the words, "iti bodhisattvaprātimokṣaḥ"[117], are found; therefore, a *Bodhisattvaprātimokṣa* must have existed, but only the title, nothing of the contents, is found in Dutt's publication. As Dutt[118] himself points out, corresponding passages of the work can be found in the Chinese *Vinayaviniścaya*[119] 決定毘尼經 and *Mahāratnakūṭadharmaparyāya*, 大寶積經 *Upālipariprcchā-parivarta* 優波離會. In these sūtras the difference between the vinaya of the bodhisattva and the śrāvaka is emphasized. The object (prayoga) and the direction (adhyāśaya) of the prātimokṣa of the śrāvakayāna and the bodhisattvayāna differ; therefore, what is considered the observance for the śrāvakayāna of śīla and pariśuddha-śīlatā 淸淨戒 is for the bodhisattvayāna a breaking of śīla and an apariśuddha-śīlatā. The opposite also holds true. Not to have attachment for existence is pariśuddha-śīlatā for the śrāvaka, but this is a violation of the śīla (dauḥśīlya) for the bodhisattva, because the bodhisattva saves humanity by his attachment to the cycle of existence. The bodhisattva upholds the sānurakṣāṁ śikṣāṁ 盡護戒, but the śrāvaka upholds the niranurakṣāṁ śikṣāṁ 不盡護戒; the former upholds saparihārāṁ śikṣāṁ 開通戒, but the latter upholds niḥparihārāṁ śikṣāṁ 不開通戒; the former upholds duranupraviṣṭāṁ śikṣam 不開通戒, but the latter upholds sāvadānāṁ śikṣāṁ 次第戒.

The *Daśabhūmika-vibhāṣā*[120] teaches emphatically the difference between the two śīlas:

> "If one falls into śrāvaka-bhūmi and pratyekabuddha-bhūmi, this is called the death of the bodhisattva. That is, all benefits will be lost. Even if one falls into hell, one will not have such great fears."

The idea of this difference in śīla was transmitted for a long time in the Mahāyāna Saṁgha, and this school of thought must have compiled the *Bodhisattvaprātimokṣa-sūtra*. The *Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra*[121] teaches the prātimokṣa of the bodhisattva as the 47 śīlas: namely, the 4 pārājayikasthānīya 重and the 43 āpatti 違犯. This is a compilation of śikṣā found in various Mahāyāna works, organized by the author of the *Bodhisattva-bhūmi*. Another work, the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, also encourages the reader to study the śikṣās in the various texts. There are Chinese translations also which stress the bodhisattva śikṣā: such as, 菩薩內戒經[122], 優婆塞戒經[123], and 梵網經[124]. The first belongs to the

*Buddhāvataṁsaka* lineage and teaches 47 śikṣā; the second explains the 6 pārājayikasthānīya and the 28 āpatti 失意罪; and the third explains the 10 pārājika 重 and 48 āpatti 輕垢罪. This last work was most influential in the development of Mahāyāna śīla in Chinese Buddhism, but according to the research of modern scholarship,[125] it is considered to be of Chinese origin.

The first half of the *Bodhisattvaprātimokṣa*, published by Dutt, contains informations on the granting of the bodhisattva śikṣā, and many passages coincide with the *Bodhisattvabhūmi*.[126] There are two Chinese translations of *Bodhisattvaprātimokṣa*[127] 菩薩戒本 and a *Bodhisattva-karmavācanā*[128] 菩薩羯磨文, which reveal the method of ordination into the bodhisattva śīla. They are believed to be compilations of selected passages from the *Bodhisattvabhūmi*. We will forgo a lengthy discussion, but the ordination discussed in these works differ vastly from the upasaṁpadā method of the Vinayapiṭaka.

In conclusion we may say that in the period of the *Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra* the renunciant bodhisattva received the upasaṁpadā and became a bhikṣu like the śrāvaka by the vinayapiṭaka, but there also existed a bodhisattva śikṣā with its own method of ordination and there were people who undertook it. But we must not conclude that a similar situation existed in the early Mahāyāna Saṁgha based upon this fact. The bodhisattvas in the early period observed the daśakuśala which was held in common by the renunciant and the householder. It is from this viewpoint that we must examine the beginnings of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

## Śrāvakasaṁgha and bodhisattvagaṇa

The formal structure of the Mahāyāna texts like the Āgama begins with "evaṁ mayā śrutaṁ" and assumes the contents to be the sermons of Śākyamuni. Invariably the members of the congregation, such as the bhikṣu and bhikṣuṇī, are enumerated, but the Mahāyāna texts almost always add a group of bodhisattvas, setting itself off from the Agama. However, the bhikṣus and bodhisattvas are never mixed; the former is always listed first and then the latter is mentioned. There are various types of enumeration in Mahāyāna works; such as, a bhikṣusaṁgha numbering 1,250, another counting 12,000 bhikṣus, still another speaking of an infinite number. It is the same with the bodhisattvas; there is no set number. Besides these those listed include bhikṣuṇi, upāsaka, upāsikā, and various devas, but the distinguishing feature of the Mahāyāna is the inclusion of the bodhisattva.

There are exceptions and some works mention only the bhikṣus and not the bodhisattvas. The Sanskrit *Vajracchedikā*[129] lists 1,250 bhikṣus and many bodhisattvas, but the various Chinese translations do not mention the latter. The Chinese *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* 小品般若[130] mentions only the 1,250 bhikṣus in its Kumārajīva, Dharmarakṣa 竺法護, and Hsuan-tsang translations and the Sanskrit text. The other Chinese translations,[131] however, give both the bhikṣusaṁgha and the bodhisattvas. Although there are such Mahāyāna texts which do not

mention the bodhisattva, the contents presuppose them and the teachings are directed to their group. There are also texts which list only the bodhisattva and not the bhikṣu. An example is the *Buddhāvataṁsaka*,[132] which is considered to be Śākyamuni's sermon immediately after his enlightenment. A possible reason for this is that at this earliest period the bhikṣu had not yet become the disciple of the Buddha. The *Daśabhūmika-s.*[133] states:

> "Once the Bhagavat resided in the devabhuvana 天界 of Paraṇirmitavaśavartin. It was about two weeks following his attainment of enlightenment, and he resided with a huge bodhisattvagaṇa in the palace of the deva king where the maṇi-treasures of Vaśavartin shone brilliantly."

The bodhisattvagaṇa refers to an organization different from the śrāvakasaṁgha.

In this way most Mahāyāna texts enumerate the śrāvakas and the bodhisattvas separately as parts of the congregation, and this is thought to reflect the actual situation of the early Mahāyāna Saṁgha. The bhikṣu and bodhisattva must have lived independent of each other, because if the two had led a communal life in the same vihāra, they probably would not be mentioned separately. This fact is strengthened by other examples of separate enumeration. For example, in the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka, Puṇyaparyāya-p.*[134] it states:

> "yad uta Gṛdhrakūtaparvatagataṁ maṁ dharmaṁ nirdeśayantaṁ drakṣayati *bodhisattvagaṇaparivṛtaṁ* bodhisattvagaṇapuraskṛtaṁ *śrāvaka-saṁghamadhyagataṁ*."

Here Śākyamuni preaches the teachings in the midst of the śrāvakasaṁgha which is surrounded by the bodhisattvagaṇa. The author of the text must have actually seen two such groups and expressed this seating arrangement in writing. A similar example is found in the *Vyākaraṇa-p.*[135] 授記品. There are many other instances[136] which reveal the two orders existing separately.

In the *Sukhavihāra-p.*[137] 安樂行品 of the same sūtra the daily reminder of the bodhisattva states that he must not reside with the bhikṣu, bhikṣuṇī, upāsaka, and upāsikā who seek the Śrāvakayāna; the bodhisattva must not associate with them or accompany them; the bodhisattva must not become intimate with them in any way; and the bodhisattva must not be within reaching distance of them in the caṅkrama 經行處 and vihāra 精舍. If, however, they come to visit on their own initiative, the bodhisattva must meet them and teach them the Mahāyāna ideal.

The *Smaller Sukhāvatīvyūha-s.*[138] 阿彌陀經 states that those who believe in Amitāyus Tathāgata at the hour of death will be welcomed by Amitāyus, who is surrounded by a host of śrāvakas and accompanied by bodhisattvas (śrāvakasaṁghaparivṛto bodhisattvagaṇapuraskṛtaḥ). The author of this sūtra must have envisioned the two groups in sukhāvatī based upon the situation in

the actual world of two separate orders. The *Sukhāvatīvyūha-s.*[139] 阿彌陀經 also states that when Ānanda was about to worship Amitāyus, Amitȳus appeared before him, surrounded by the bodhisattvagaṇa and the śrāvakasaṁgha. The two types of saṁgha in sukhāvatī are referred to in the *MPP-śāstra*[140] and the *Daśabhūmikavibhāṣā*.

The *Dasabhūmika-v.* explains the method of the bodhisattva discipline and shows that it is unlike that of the śrāvaka. For example, in expanding upon the ti-saraṇa it states that the bodhisattva pays homage to the Buddha, Dharma, and Saṁgha, because he desires to achieve enlightenment and not because he vows to practice the śrāvakayāna. It goes on to show the methods of homage and when it comes to the saṁgha it states:[141]

> "If you should meet people, seeking the śrāvakayāna, who have not yet attained enlightenment, you must awaken in him the determination to become a Buddha and encourage him to acquire the daśabala 十力 of the Buddha. In order to do so one must first make material offerings and catch his heart, and then teach Mahāyāna Buddhism to him. One must respect the saints who have reached the understanding of the srotāpanna, sakṛdāgāmin, anāgāmin, and arhat, but one must not seek the phala 功德 of the śrāvakayāna himself and think of acquiring the enlightenment of the śrāvakayāna."

According to this passage, the bodhisattva's homage to the saṁgha is for the purpose of converting the followers of the śrāvakayāna to the Mahāyāna, and though the bodhisattva pays respect to the śrāvaka saint, he himself must not adhere to its teachings. The bodhisattva pays homage to the bodhisattvagaṇa. The same idea is found in the *Ugradattaparipṛcchā-s.*[142] 郁伽長者經. In another section of the *Daśabhūmi-v.*[143] it states:

> "When one sees the śrāvakasaṁgha, one must awaken bodhicitta and think of the bodhisattvagaṇa. This is the bodhisattva's homage to the saṁgha."

The bodhisattvagaṇa in this case, however, is not the saṁgha of ordinary bodhisattvas, but the "bodhisattvagaṇa[144] of the daśabhūmi," that is, the saintly bodhisattvas. Again, at the beginning of the work[145] the author writes that as he composes, he meditates upon many things and thinks of the tri-ratna and the bodhisattvagaṇa. Here the order of bodhisattva is considered completely apart from the tri-ratna.

The fact of the two saṁgha is further clarified in the *MPP-śāstra* in the section which comments upon the following paragraph in the Chinese *MPP*:[146]

> "When I gained anuttaraṁ saṁyaksambodhiṁ, the countless śrāvakas became my saṁgha, and with one sermon I made them all arhats. . . .

> I will also have the countless bodhisattvas become my saṁgha, and I wish to make the countless bodhisattvas attain avaivartikatva with one sermon and make them possess infinite life and light."

This quotation tells us that the Buddha had a śrāvakasaṁgha after he had attained enlightenment and that he will have a bodhisattvasaṁgha in the future. Commenting upon this passage, the *MPP-śāstra*[147] states that the various Buddhas have three types of saṁgha: first, there is only the śrāvakasaṁgha and no bodhisattva saṁgha. For example, since the Śākya-buddha did not have a separate bodhisattvasaṁgha, Maitreya, Mañjuśrī, and other bodhisattvas sat within the śrāvakasaṁgha. Second, some Buddhas preach only the Ekayāna teachings and therefore have only a bodhisattva-saṁgha. And third, some Buddhas have both types of saṁgha; such as, Buddha Amitāyus in whose land are many bodhisattvas but only a few śrāvakas. As for as the *MPP-sūtra* is concerned, there is a desire to from a bodhisattvasaṁgha for this reason.

The statement that the Śākya-Buddha did not have an independent bodhisattvasaṁgha reflects the actual situation at the time of Śākyamuni's enlightenment. The bodhisattvayāna appeared much later together with the circulation of the Mahāyāna sūtras; therefore, the formation of the bodhisattvasaṁgha is predicted in terms of the future. Other sections[148] in the work also distinguish the two saṁghas.

In the oldest translation of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* 道行般若[149] the opening sentences describes the gathering of bodhisattvas:

> "The Buddha resided at Gṛdhrakūṭa of Rājagṛha. He was together with his disciples, the innumerable Mahābhikṣusaṁgha, such as Śāriputra, Subhūti, and others, as well as the innumerable bodhisattva mahāsattvas, such as Maitreya, Mañjuśrī, and others. The day was the 15th, the day of uposatha. The Buddha said to Subhūti: 'Today is the great assembly of the bodhisattvas, so I shall teach the prajñā-pāramitā to the various bodhisattvas'."

This shows that the prajñā-pāramitā was taught at the bodhisattva gatherings. Among the *PP* literature this work translated by Lokakṣema 支婁迦讖 (A.D. 179) is the oldest, and the next is the 大明度經, translated by 支謙 (222–228). The other translations in the same *PP* lineage include 摩訶般若波羅蜜鈔經, tr. by Dharmarakṣa 竺法護[150] (265), 小品般若, tr. by Kumārajīva 鳩摩羅什 (408), 大般若波羅蜜多經第四會, tr. by Hsuan-tsang, (660–663) 第五會, tr. by Hsuan-tsang (660–663), and 佛母出生三法藏般若波羅蜜經, tr. by Dānapāla 施護 (982). In this series of *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* translations only the two oldest record that a great assembly of bodhisattvas was held. In the succeeding versions this fact is eliminated, probably in order to interpret prajñā-pāramitā from a broader perspective. In such a case we must value the oldest translations as revealing the original

circumstance in which the prajñā-pāramitā was taught. In the newer translations the primitive forms are sometimes lost.

Thus far I have shown through the examination of the relatively older Mahāyāna texts that the bodhisattva formed an organization separate from the śrāvakasaṁgha. The "gaṇa" of bodhisattvagaṇa is synonymous with saṁgha and means an organized body. In the Āgama[151] it is used in the sense of saṁgha and in Jainism it refers to its religious order. The bodhisattvagaṇa, therefore, is not merely a random gathering of followers, but an organized order parallel to the śrāvakasaṁgha. They did not completely disconnect themselves from the śrāvakayāna followers, because relationships were maintained in order to convert them to the Mahāyāna. This is clear from the preceding discussions of the *Saddharma-puṇḍarīka* and *Daśabhūmi-v.* Consequently, it would not be wrong to imagine that in the bodhisattvagaṇa there were many śrāvakas or Nikāya Buddhists who had been converted. For this reason, although the doctrines held by the two groups differed, they were not necessarily antagonistic to each other. Since the Abhidharma texts do not contain criticism of the Mahāyāna, it is impossible to tell how the bodhisattvagaṇa was regarded by the śrāvakayāna bhikṣu, although probably with disdain. On the other hand the bodhisattva paid respect to the saints of the śrāvakayāna, but they dared not leave their religious problems to be solved by them.

## The stūpa as the origin of Bodhisattva Buddhism

In the preceding sections I have attempted to shed light upon the differences in character of Mahāyāna Buddhism and Nikāya Buddhism. The origin of the Mahāyāna was shown to be radically different from the historical origin of the Nikāya saṁgha. What, then, constituted the institutional basis from which Mahāyāna Buddhism arose?

As I have stated, there were both renunciants and householders among the bodhisattvas, and the former lived by the offerings made by the faithful worshippers. The question arises as to the place and method by which the renunciant bodhisattva received the offerings of the faithful. From my studies of this problem I have reached the conclusion that it was the stūpa which was the religious center for the renunciant bodhisattvas. Apart from the stūpa, there also existed the āraṇyāyatana[152] as centers of meditation and austerities. The stūpa was mainly a place to care for illness and to study the sūtras. Since the limitation in space precludes a detailed analysis of all pertinent sūtras, only two or three important ones will be taken up to demonstrate my conclusion. The older Chinese translations, completed in the second and third centuries with almost no emendations since, will be used as sources, since they maintain the old form of the sūtras and when used with care reveal much not found in the newer versions.

First, I wish to discuss the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* as a work based upon the institution of the stūpa. This sūtra has several extant editions: 1. 正法華經 tr. by Dharmarakṣa 竺法護 (A.D. 286); 2. 妙法蓮華經 tr. by Kumārajīva (406); 3.

添品妙法蓮華經 tr. by Jñānagupta 闍那崛多 and Dharmagupta 達摩笈多 (601); 4. a Tibetan translation; and 5. a Sanskrit text.

The *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* begins with the *Nidāna-parivarta* 序品. The Buddha reveals[153] to the congregation the 18,000 Eastern worlds, illuminating by the light from the ūrṇakośa of his brow. His rays clearly reveal everything in these worlds, but most conspicuously the seven-jewelled stūpas which enshrine the relics, dhātu, of the Buddhas in these worlds. This is the prelude, and the narrative unfolds as Maitreya Bodhisattva questions these supernatural phenomena. He carries the doubt to Mañjuśrī and asks him for clarification. In gāthā[154] form the question includes the facts that after the death of the Buddha the bodhisattva worshipped the śarīra and made 100 billion stūpas, and that the stūpas were made of seven jewels, decorated with flags and bells, presented with flowers and incense and saluted with music. Mañjuśrī answers that the supernatural events were manifested to preach a great teaching; and that to his memory when the Buddhas of the same name, such as Candrasūryapradīpa 日月燈明佛, appeared one after another and then passed away, he saw that[155] their śarīras were divided and 100 billion stūpas were built. Now Śākyamuni reveals the Eastern Buddhist countries to preach the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*. In this way the stūpa is an important theme from the opening *Nidāna-p.*

The *Upāyakauśalya-p.* 方便品 introduces the merits of stūpa worship. The wisdom of the Buddhas is profound and difficult to fathom, but the Buddhas preach by means of upāya and parables; and by thus teaching the Ekayāna dharma they guide the sentient beings to enter the path of truth. And[156] when the Buddhas pass away, the sentient beings worship the remains of the Buddhas, erect 800 billion stūpas, decorate them with seven jewels, or erect stone stūpas, or erect stūpas of candana wood, and worship them. The immeasurable merit of erecting and worshipping stūpas is emphasized. Even[157] a youth, aimlessly building a stūpa by gathering sand, attained enlightenment by the merit gained; and a deranged man,[158] entering a stūpa unknowingly, could attain enlightenment, if he would repeat Namo Buddāya 南無佛 just once.

In the *Vyākaraṇa-p.*[159] 授記品 there appears the same thought. Mahākātyāyana and Mahāmaudgalyāyana have already attained arhatship in the śrāvakayāna, but they awaken to Mahāyāna and undertake its disiplines. The Buddha prophesized that they would worship 800 billion Buddha, build stūpas towering 1,000 yojanas, adorn them with seven jewels, make offerings and worship them, and by this merit (puṇya) attain enlightenment.

The *Puṇyaparyāya-p.*[160] 分別功德品 states that caityas of the Tathāgata should be built wherever the kulaputra and kuladhitṛ who worship the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* stand, sit, or walk; and the peoples of the world should revere them as the stūpas of the Tathāgata. Here the believer of the sūtra and homage to the stūpa become intimately connected. Due to overemphasizing the merit of worshipping and reciting the sūtra, some passages[161] state that it is unnecessary to erect stūpas or vihāras, or make offerings to the Saṁgha; but this is in the prose section and in the geya[162] which restates this idea in verse it clearly says

that although the faith in *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* is of infinite merit, the faithful must also erect a stūpa, enshrine the śarīra, adorn it with seven jewels, perform profound music, and worship it. The simultaneous worship of both the sūtra is most important. The ensuing verse[163] states that whenever the bodhisattva preaches the sūtra, even if it is one verse, whether walking, standing, sitting, or sleeping, a stūpa dedicated to the Buddha should be erected. This verse section is probably older than the prose passage. The worshippers of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* arose from among the worshippers of the stūpa, but[164] their extreme emphasis on the faith in the sūtra led to their expulsion from the vihāra.

In the *Bhaiṣajyarājapūrvayoga-p.* 藥王菩薩本事品 it relates how Candrasūryavimalaprabhāsaśriya-buddha 日月淨明德佛 appeared long ago and taught the dharma, and how he handed the transmission of the dharma to his disciple, Sarvasattvapriyadarśana-bodhisattva 一切衆生喜見菩薩 and then entered nirvāṇa. At the time[165] this Buddha also entrusted his disciples, the world, and especially the relic (dhātu) after his decease to the bodhisattva. And when this Buddha passed away during the night, Sarvasattvapriyadarśana worshipped and cremated the Buddha's body, placed the relic into 84,000 reliquaries which he made and erected 84,000 stūpas. Such is the way in which the sūtra frequently repeats the division of relics and erection of stūpas, and this is modelled after the events[166] following Śākyamuni's decease when his body was cremated, the remains divided and deposited in stūpas.

This emphasis upon relics and stūpas reaches its climax in the *Stūpadarśana-p.* 見寶塔品. According to this section,[167] when Śākyamuni preaches the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* a seven-jewelled tower, 500 yojanas in height, rises from the earth and appears in the sky before the Buddha. When he opens the door to the stūpa with his right hand, inside there appears the Buddha Prabhūtaratna 多宝如來. Prabhūtaratna attained enlightenment in the timeless past, and he made a vow, praṇidhāna, that his stūpa would appear wherever this sūtra was taught, and he would verify the truth of this dharmparyāya. Then Prabhūtaratna inside the seven-jewelled stūpa gives up half of his seat and invites Śākyamuni into the stūpa. He enters and thus in the seven-jewelled stūpa sit two Buddhas in the lotus position. Here the Buddha of the past and the Buddha of the present become one as testimonials to the timeless truth of the dharma.

This truth is symbolized in the stūpa, for it enshrines the relics of the Buddha and manifests his personality. The *Tathāgatāyuṣpramāṇa-p.*[168] 壽量品 states that the Buddha's life is timeless and that his dharmakāya is eternally present. The Buddha's eternal presence is contained in the stūpa, and although enshrining relics, the worshipper sees it as the eternal Buddha. If one does not believe in the existence of the Buddha, since his human form disappeared at the age of 80, the worship of the stūpa is meaningless[169]; those who believe that the Buddha entered anupadhiśeṣanirvāṇa at the moment of parinirvāṇa do not worship the stūpa. Even if such a worship were performed,[170] it would be merely in memory of the Buddha now gone.

In contrast the faithfuls who believe that the Buddha is eternal and exists in

the ever-present now worship the stūpas as a means of worshipping the Buddha. They construct huge stūpas, adorn them with seven-jewels, present canopies, keyūras, flags, banners, bells, burn incense, adorn with flowers, perform musical instruments, light oil lamps, beautify the stūpas and worship them. The concept of the eternal Buddha is based upon the eternal truth of the dharma. For this reason, throughout the sūtra the truth of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* is reiterated. And the union of the eternal nature of the dharma (Prabhūtaratna Buddha) and the eternal nature of the Buddha (Śākyamuni Buddha) is symbolized in the two Buddhas seated together inside the stūpa. Therefore, this sūtra, containing the *Tathāgatāyuṣpramāṇa-p.* and *Stūpasamdarśana-p*, is deeply connected with stūpa worship from inherent necessity.

Thus far we have seen that stūpa worship formed the basis for the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, and now we turn our attention to the study of stūpa and its Chinese translations. Words which are used with stūpa include dhātu and śarīra, both referring to the relics of the Buddha, and caitya, which is a synonym for this term. All these words are found in the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, but we will forgo a detailed discussion on their meanings and examine only stūpa, the most frequently used term. Stūpa (Tibetan, mchod rten) is transliterated into the Chinese variously: 塔，塔婆，偷婆，兜婆，窣覩婆，窣堵婆，藪斗婆，蘇偷婆, and sometimes it is rendered 佛圖 and 浮屠. Being transliterations, they fail to express the original connotation. In comparing the Sanskrit and Chinese versions of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* the following translations, other than the common 塔, are found: 塔廟，塔寺，佛廟，廟，寺. The study of these terms will aid our research on stūpa in the Chinese texts lacking the Sanskrit original.

Since there are numerous examples of stūpa being rendered as 塔, there is no special significance dwelling on this word. As for 塔廟, there are more than ten instances in Kumārajīva's translation,[171] and it can also be found in the Dharmarakṣa translation, 正法華經[172]. This term expresses the original sound of stūpa by 塔 and its meaning by 廟. The Chinese 廟 is a shrine which holds the ancestral spirits. It is not a mere cemetary, but a sacred hall which one is able to enter. Similar translations are 佛廟[173] and 石廟. Thus both Dharmarakṣa and Kumārajīva must have known that a sacred hall was part of the stūpa.

The next translation 塔寺 is found three times in the Kumārajīva's translation.[174] In the Sanskrit the original is stūpa at one place,[175] vihāra at another,[176] and the third lacks the corresponding term. Dharmarakṣa translates it 塔廟 in the first instance, but the second and third are lacking. In certain cases it is a dangerous practice to determine by the extant Sanskrit text the original terms for Kumārajīva's translations, because the original used by him and the text we have today need not necessarily coincide. However, in the first instance the Sanskrit is stūpa, 正法華經 has 塔廟, the Tibetan version has mchod rten; therefore, we may conclude that Kumārjīva translated stūpa as 塔寺. In the third instance we cannot determine whether or not Kumārajīva translated vihāra 塔寺, because although the Sanskrit text is vihāra, the Tibetan is gtsug lag khan and the

corresponding word is lacking in 正法華經. Kumārajīva translates[177] vihāra as 僧坊, so it is believed that the Sanskrit text used by him and the one available today are different, because it is unthinkable that he would have translated vihara as 僧坊 at one time and 塔寺 at another.

Nevertheless, we know from the first instance above that Kumārajīva translated stūpa as 塔寺. Dharmarakṣa made the same translation for stūpa, and it can be found more frequently in the 正法華經[178]. When we compare the original term for these instances, in very case it is stūpa. Dharmarakṣa also translated stūpa as simply 寺[179].

That the translators interpreted stūpa as 塔 or 寺 has a great significance. The original meaning of the Chinese 寺 is not clear, but according to Professor Kojun Fukui[180] it is a transformation of 畤, based upon 賓萌集卷三 by 俞越. The term 畤 is said to have been a libation ceremony for the Heaven. In the 後漢書卷六三 and 呉志卷四 are found the terms 浮圖祠, and in 後漢書卷四三 it states:

> "King Chu 楚王 reads the subtle words of Huang-lao 黄老, and respects the benevolent offerings to the Buddha 浮圖之仁祠."

Professor Fukui thinks that the temple 寺 was called 祠 in ancient times. This is the reason that there is a common element in the meanings of 祠 and 畤, and forms the basis for inferring that 祠 changed to 寺. Thus, the original meaning of 寺 is 祠, a hall to enshrine the Buddha, and in this sense it is correct to translate stūpa as 塔寺 or 寺. In later periods, however, 寺 is the translation for vihāra or āvāsa and refers of the sanctuary of the Buddhist monks. Such a change must have occurred, because the monks lived on the compounds of a hall enshrining the Buddha. It is not clear when this happened, but already in the *Caturvargika-v.*[181] (tr. 410–412) āvāsa is translated as 寺, and the same term is found in Kumārajīva's translation of *Daśabhānavāra-v.*,[182] which may be interpreted as referring to the monks' residence. Thus in Kumārajīva's time we can regard 寺 as possessing the meaning of the residence of monks, and therefore 塔寺 included both the hall enshrining the Buddha and a building within the compound housing people. In Fa-hsien's translation of the *Mahāsāṁghika-v.*[183] (tr. 416–418) the following passage is found:

> "Animals should not enter and dirty the 塔寺."
> "Be careful that animals do not enter the 塔寺 and break statues and destroy the flowers and plants."

The term 塔寺 refers not only to a stūpa of the mound-type alone, but also to a compound with the stūpa at the center. Within the compound there must have existed a hall enshrining the Buddha, rows of plants and trees, and a building housing people. In the Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions one passage[184] states that a well was dug in the Vajrastūpa and donated. This must mean that a well was dug in

the stūpa compound which was called Vajrastūpa. We may conclude and say that there are two meanings to stūpa: in the narrow sense it refers to the mound-type in which the śarīra was deposited, and in the broad sense to a compound, centered around the mound stūpa, including caitya, lakes, bodhi-trees, wells and lodgings.

## The stūpa as a model of Sukhāvatī

There is no doubt that the sukhāvatī in the *Smaller Sukhāvatīvyūha-sūtra* 阿彌陀經 is modelled after the stūpa of the Buddha. When the method of erecting a stūpa as found[185] in the *Caturvargika-v.*, *Pañcavargika-v.*, *Mahāsāṁghika-v.*, and Mūtasarvastivada-vinaya-kṣudrakavastu is compared with the description of sukhāvatī in this sūtra, there is a striking resemblance.

First, according to the sūtra,[186] the sukhāvatī is adorned with seven terraces, vedikā 欄楯. The various vinayas[187] tell us that the vedikā was built on the stūpa, and this is verified by the vedikā found on the stūpas at Barhut, Sāñchī, and Buddhagayā. In the main stūpa at Sāñchī the vedikā is twofold, found on the inner and outer side of the pradakṣinapatha 繞道. If the pradakṣiṇapatha is increased, so would the number of vedikā. The sukhāvatī must have been imagined from a huge stūpa with a sevenfold vedikā. Next, in the sukhāvatī there are seven rows of tāla-tree.[188] The *Pañcavargika-v.*[189] mentions the planting of trees on both sides of a stūpa, and the *Mahāsāṁghika-v.*[190] instructs the planting of trees, such as the āmra tree, jambu tree, etc. The worshippers passed these rows of tree and proceeded to the stūpa. In the sukhāvatī the sevenfold rows of tree have nets of bells kiṅkinījāla hanging, and when the breeze blows they play sweet music.

The sukhāvatī also has a lotus pond[191] made of seven kinds of jewels and strewn with golden sand. The *Mahāsāṁghika-v.*[192] speaks of ponds found with the stūpa: ponds are to be built on four sides of the stūpa and in them are to be planted the flowers of utpala, padma, kumuda, puṇḍarīka, etc. The sukhāvatī ponds have padmas with circumference as large as chariot wheels.

Heavenly musical instruments,[193] divyāni tūryāṇi, are always being played in the sukhāvatī. The vinayas[194] speak of the offering, pūjā, of music made before the Buddha stūpa: songs, dances, and music. Various types of clothing, banners, canopies, flowers, incense, and foods are also offerings made to the stūpa. This is idealized in the sukhāvatī: heavenly music is played and the chorus of birds, such as haṁsa, kurauñca, mayūla, etc. rings throughout the land. And from the heaven rains the celestial mandara flowers, divyamāndārava-puṣpa.

The preceding comparisons suggest that the sukhāvatī is the idealized image of a huge Buddha stūpa.[195]. According to the vinaya, a shrine 塔龕[196] was made on the four sides, garbha, of the stūpa, and also an image 龕像[197] was carved. This means that a shrine was made in the garbha of the stūpa and an image of Buddha place within it. This probably arose as a religious necessity to meet the demands of the faithful who believed in an eternal Buddha through the medium

of the stūpa. The process by which the Buddha statue developed is not clear, but when the Buddhist artist first learned of the sculpturing technique and carved statues, he must have first thought of enshrining it in the garbha of the stūpa. The Buddha image so conceived would symbolize the fact that the stūpa was regarded as the Buddha. Such a statue would require that a front view be carved in detail but the back would not have to be made in such detail.

The sukhāvatī and the stūpa thus have striking resemblances, but the *Smaller Sukhāvatīvyūha* does not mention the worship of stūpas. The reason is that the center of worship is Amitāyus, who must have replaced the stūpa as the object of devotion. This transformation of worship from stūpa to Amitāyus eliminated the need for stūpa worship. Amitāyus, also, is the possessor of eternal life and does not become extinct in parinirvāṇa; therefore, a śarīra would not exist and there would be no reason for a stūpa in sukhāvatī.

The 無量壽經, a Chinese translation of the *Sukhāvatīvyūha-sūtra*, also makes no reference to the stūpa. This work,[198] however, has 48 vows of Amitāyus and is a relatively new compilation. Five translations into Chinese exist, and in the older translations[199] the vows number 24, one of which comments upon stūpa worship. In the translation by 支謙 made between A.D. 222 and 253, 阿彌陀三耶佛薩樓過度人道經[200], the sixth of the 24 vows states that the kulaputra and kuladuhitr, wishing to be born in paradise, perform various meritorious acts; they practice dāna, worship the stūpa, circumambulate the stūpa, burn incense, sprinkle flowers, illuminate the lights, erect stūpas, build vihāras, and sunder blind desires. Amitāyus vows that unless these people are able to realize their wish by performing these meritorious deeds, he will not attain Buddhahood. Here, the erecting and worshipping of stūpas are considered to be causes for birth in sukhāvatī. This vow, however, is lost in the later translations.[201]

The erecting and worshipping of stūpas are mentioned in other sections of the sūtra. In the 阿彌陀三耶三佛薩樓過度人道經,[202] there are listed the three types of people who will be born in sukhāvatī: the first type includes those who, wishing to be born in sukhāvatī, renounce the worldly life, become śramaṇas, and practice the six pāramitās. At the moment of death Amitāyus himself will come to welcome this type of worshipper to sukhāvatī. The second type refers to those who, while desiring to be born in Amitāyus' land, are unable to renounce the worldly attachments to wife and children, Therefore, while leading the householder's life, they believe in the Buddhist teachings, make offerings to the śramaṇa, construct temples, erect stūpas, adorn them with banners and canopies, sprinkle flowers, offer incense, illuminate lights, and worship them. Such people will be welcomed by the Nirmāṇa-Kāya 化佛 of Amitāyus at the hour of death. The third type embraces those who lack the resources to build temples or erect stūpas. We can see from this that the erection of stūpas and faith in stūpas are considered to be important causes for birth in the sukhāvati.

These three types of Pure Land followers are also listed in the 無量清浄平等覺經[203], translated by 白延 in 256–259. The second type is described exactly in

the same way: those who build temples, erect stūpas, and worship them are born in sukhāvatī. These three types of people are not found in the later translations, and the *Sukhāvatīvyūha* departs from the practice of worshipping stūpas. In the older versions, however, we have shown how closely this sūtra was connected with stūpa worship.

## *Ugradattaparipṛcchā-Sūtra* and the Buddhāvataṁsaka *Gocarapariśuddha-Parivarta*

There are many other Mahāyāna texts which contain reference to the worship of stūpas. I will limit myself to discussing two interesting works. The first is the *Ugradattaparipṛcchā-s.*, which has three Chinese and one Tibetan translations. The Chinese translations are 法鏡經[204], translated between A.D. 167–189; 郁伽羅越問菩薩行經[205] tr. by Dharmarakṣa between 265–308; and *Mahāratnakūṭa-dhar-maparyāya Ugradattaparipṛcchā-parivarta* 大寶積經郁伽長者會[206], around 424. This work is quoted almost fully in Kumārajīva's translation of the *Daśabhūmika-vibhāṣā*,[207]

This sūtra explains in detail the disciplines of the renunciant bodhisattva and the householder bodhisattva. In the section discussing the practices of the householder bodhisattva the 法鏡經[208] states:

> "If one thinks of entering the 廟, first one must worship by prostrating his body before the front of the gate of 廟, and then enter the 廟."

From the preceding study we know that the original term for 廟 is stūpa. In Kumārajīva's translation of the *Daśabhūmika-vibhāṣā*[209] this passage occurs, as follows:

> "If the householder bodhisattva wishes to enter this 佛寺, he must worship by prostrating his body in front of the gate of 寺 and think in the following manner."

The original Sanskrti term for 佛寺 was probably also stūpa. In this work 塔寺 is the translation for stūpa, as in the passage[210] which reads:

> "When this householder bodhisattva, desiring to renounce the world, enters the 塔寺 and worships the Buddha, he thinks of the following three things."

We have already shown that Kumārajiva translated stūpa as 塔寺, and in these quotations we can see that the place of worship of the householder bodhisattva was a stūpa in the broad sense of the term.

In Dharmaraksa's translation, 郁伽羅越問菩薩行經, this passage[211] is rendered:

"If the householder bodhisattva thinks of entering the 佛寺精舍, then he must worship before the gate with singleness of heart, and after that enter the 精舍."

As judged from the examples found in 正法華經, the term 佛寺 is a translation from stūpa. The only difference is that here 精舍, the translation for vihāra, is added. The two terms, however, again tell us that the householder bodhisattva worshipped in the stūpa in the broad sense. This is evident from the title of this section, "Chapter Six on Worshipping the Stūpa,"[212] 禮塔品第六.

The preceding translations clearly reveal that the stūpa was the place of worship for the householder bodhisattva, but the situation is changed in the *Mahāratnakūṭa-dharmaparyāya Ugradattaparipṛcchā-p.*[213] In this work the same passage is translated, as follows:

"If the householder bodhisattva wishes to enter the 僧坊, he must enter after he has worshipped in prostration before the gate."

The term 僧坊 cannot be considered to have been stūpa, so it must have been vihāra. This is true in ths Tibetan translation,[214] also.

"khyim bdag byaṅ cub sems dpaḥ khyim de gtsug lag khaṅ du ḥjug par ḥdod na . . . "

Gtsug lag khaṅ is a translation for vihāra.

The *Ugradattaparipṛcchā-p.* in Ratnakūṭa is a fifth century translation, and the Tibetan is a 9th century translation. In the old second century Chinese version the place of worship of the householder bodhisattva is called the stūpa, but in the newer texts of the 5th and 9th centuries, this is changed into vihāra. The same transformation occurs in the living quarters of the renunciant bodhisattva. In the 法鏡經[215] the living quarters are referred to as āraṇyāyatana 山澤 and stūpa 廟. The renunciant bodhisattva practices austerities in the āraṇyāyatana, but when he becomes ill or when he studies the sūtra, he goes to the stūpa. In the *Daśabhūmika-vibhāṣā*[215] the two are rendered 阿蘭若處 (āraṇyāyatana) and 塔寺, respectively; and in the 郁伽羅越問菩薩行經[217] they are rendered 樹下草褥坐 arañña and 精舍房處, vihāra or kuṭī. The original Sanskrit in this case is already vihāra. In the 郁伽長者會[218] they are translated as 阿練兒 arañña and 房舍, kuṭī.

This study shows that the quarters of the renunciant bodhisattva were originally called stūpa, but it was changed into vihāra. Mahāyāna Buddhism arose, centered on the stūpa, but as the compounds expanded to include lodgings and quarters, it came to be called vihāra, even though the stūpa remained within the compounds. At the same time the doctrines of Mahāyāna Buddhism developed in many directions and there may have been followers who gradually drifted away from stūpa worship. The change from stūpa to vihāra is also evident in the second work to be considered, the *Buddhāvataṁsaka Gocarapariśuddha-p.*

The oldest Chinese translation of *Gocaraparisuddha-p.* is 菩薩本業經,[219] tr. by 支謙 between 222–253. The next is 諸菩薩求佛本業經[220] tr. by 聶道眞 between 280–313. The third is Buddhabhadra's tr. 大方廣佛華嚴經第七淨行品,[221] between 418–421. The fourth is Śikṣānanda's translation of the same sūtra 大方廣佛華嚴經第十一淨行品[222], between 695–699. The fifth is the Tibetan translation,[223] *Spyod yul yoṅ su dag paḥi leḥu bcu drug pa.*

The *Gocaraparisuddha-p.* discusses the practices of both the householder and renunciant bodhisattva. It strongly encourages the householder bodhisattva to renounce the worldly life and concentrate on the disciplines. The lodging for the householder bodhisattva who renounces the worldly life is called the stūpa. In the oldest translation by 支謙 it states that[224] "when you enter the 宗廟 of the Buddha, awaken the following vow." The living quarter of the renunciant bodhisattva is rendered 佛宗廟 which is a translation of stūpa. In the 聶道眞 translation[225] it is rendered as 佛寺. He was contemporaneous with Dharmarakṣa and aided the latter's translation of 正法華經; therefore, there are many translated terms common to the two. The original for 佛寺 is undoubtedly stūpa. Buddhabhadra translates this sentence[226] as, "when one enters the 僧坊," indicating the original to be vihāra. In Śikṣānanda's translation[227] it is 僧伽藍, whose original is clearly saṁghārāma. This is true for the Tibetan rendtion:[228]

> "khyim nas khyim med par ḥbyuṅ baḥi tshe . . . dge ḥdun gyi ra baḥi mtshams ḥdaḥ baḥi tshe . . ."

The translation for saṁghārāma here is dge ḥdun gyi ra ba. The Tibetan is identical with Śikṣānanda's version of the latter 7th century.

In conclusion the comparative study of the various versions reveals the transformations in the name of the renunciant bodhisattva's living quarters: from stūpa of the 3rd century translation to vihāra of the 5th and saṁghārāma of the 7th and 9th century translations. The denotation, however, remained the same; they referred to the living quarters in the compound centered around the stūpa. The renunciant bodhisattva read the sūtra in his own living quarters, and worshipped the Buddha and the stūpa. The worshipping of the Buddha referred to paying homage to the Buddha image in the garbha of the stūpa; and the worshipping of the stūpa meant walking around the stūpa three times, reciting the sūtra and praising the virtues of the Buddha. This is taught in all five translations.[229]

## The Nikāya Saṁgha and the Buddha stūpa

The worship of the Buddha stūpa is taught not only in Mahāyāna Buddhist texts but also in the vinaya of Nikāya Buddhism. Although stūpa worship is not mentioned in the Pali vinaya, it is found[230] in the *Caturvargika-v.* of the Dharmaguptika, *Pañcavargika-v.* of the Mahīśāsaka, *Daśabhāṇavāra-v.* of the Sarvastivādin, the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-v.*, and the *Mahāsāṁghika-v.* This leads us to consider the possibility of stūpa worship developing from Nikāya Buddhism.

But this is unlikely for reasons which I shall now discuss. Since the only sources we have for the study of pre-Mahāyāna conditions, the Mahāyāna texts themselves, give only an inadequate picture, the following arguments will remain within the bounds of inference.

First, the fact that stūpa worship did not exist in Nikāya Buddhism originally is logical from the doctrinal standpoint of the three treasures, tri-ratna, which distinguishes sharply the Buddha, Dharma, and Saṁgha. If the Buddha should be included in the Saṁgha, the basic doctrine of Buddhism falls apart. Since the stūpa represents the Buddha, it would be included in the first of the tri-ratna. From this standpoint it is unthinkable that stūpa worship was part of Saṁgha Buddhism. For this reason even in cases of the existence of stūpa worship, the properties of the stūpa and that of the saṁgha were considered separately. The *Mahāsāṁghika-v.*,[231] for example, states that the land of the saṁgha and the land of the stūpa must not encroach upon each other, and the *Sarvāstivāda-vinaya-vibhāṣā*[232] 薩婆多毘尼毘婆沙 states that a stūpa must not be erected on the land of the caturdiśa-saṁgha, with the exception that it be permitted upon the approval of the whole membership of saṁgha.

In the *Caturvargika-v.* and the *Pañcavargika-v*, the distinction between the real estates of the saṁgha and the stūpa is not made, probably because the Dharmaguptaka and the Mahīśāsaka exposited the view[233] that the Buddha exists in the saṁgha. The material properties, however, are differentiated in every case. The *Mahāsāṁghika-v.*[234] warns that if the karmadāna 知事, because of hardships in the saṁgha, sells goods belonging to the stūpa and offers it to the saṁgha, he has committed the offense of stealing and is guilty of pārājika. The saṁgha was not permitted to consume or use the property owned by the stūpa, and at the same time the stūpas could not be renovated or fixed by using materials owned by the saṁgha. The *Daśabhāṇavāra-v.*[235] makes it clear that the properties belonging to the saṁgha and that belonging to the stūpa should not be mixed or diverted for each others use. The stūpa property must not be given to or divided among the caturdiśa-saṁgha. The *Sarvāstivāda-vinaya-vibhāṣā*[236] points out that the offerings made to the tri-ratna should be equally divided among the three. The *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya-kṣudrakavastu*[237] states that the offerings to the Śāriputra stūpa (stūpa of the śrāvaka) must be divided among the saṁgha, but the offerings to the Buddha stūpa may be used only for the needs of that stūpa. The *Pañcavargika-v.*[238] also makes the point that offerings made to stūpas other than that of the Buddha or the pratyekabuddha may be consumed by the caturdiśa-saṁgha, but the goods offered to the two types of stūpa may not be used by the saṁgha. The same rule is found in the *Caturvargika-v.*:[239] the offerings made to the śrāvaka stūpa may be used by the bhikṣu and bhikṣuṇī, but this is prohibited in the case of the Buddha stūpa.

If the saṁgha was not permitted access to the offerings made to the Buddha stūpa, it was only natural that they oppose the worship and offering to the stūpa. In Nikāya Buddhism there was a theory that offerings made to the saṁgha would bring great merit, puṇya, but that made to the stūpa would have little

merit. This idea could be advocated from the standpoint of the concept of Buddhahood, but also from the economic viewpoint. The Dharmaguptaka[240] alone takes the opposite standpoint that there is a greater merit in offering to the stūpa. In the *Śaikṣadharma* of the Dharmaguptaka *Prātimokṣa*,[241] there are 26 articles concerned with the Buddha stūpa; in fact, the *Caturvargika-v.* of this school is the only one that contains reference to the stūpa in the prātimokṣa. Although we can infer a strong connection between the Dharmaguptaka and stūpa worship, there is no special reason to believe that this school had intimate relationship with the rise of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

The vinayas[242] further explain that dance and music were parts of the offerings made to the stūpa. It is a well known fact the bhikṣus are forbidden to perform or watch dances or musical entertainment, and they are not permitted to touch silver, gold, or other treasures. These commandments are found in the daśa-śikṣāpada[243] 十戒 of the śramaṇera. Consequently, the dance and musical entertainments and the handling of silver, gold and jewelled ornaments were duties of the householder. It is clear that the bhikṣu could not have had a leading role in such a stūpa worship, and it is difficult to conceive of stūpa worship arising from such a situation.

At the beginning of the Christian era, it it thought that stūpas which did not belong to Nikāya Buddhism existed. This can be shown by the Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions. The Kharoṣṭhī letters were prevalent in North India primarily, and were used in a definite period and area. Therefore, although the discovered inscription is incomplete, we can reach some kind of scientific conclusion. There are 96 varieties of Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions collected and published by Sten Konow.[244] According to his chronology,[245] the oldest inscription among these is said to be older than the first half of the first century B.C. and the latest to be 300 or 315 A.D. However, those belonging to the 3rd or 4th century are very few, and the great majority is prior to these dates.

There are a total of 17 inscriptions among them which are connected with the erection of stūpas. The number is very small compared to the total, but from point of the amount the percentage is fairly great, because there are many long prose inscriptions. The 17 are numbers 1, 2, 13, 15, 16, 17, 27, 31, 32, 61, 62, 72, 76, 79, 80, 82, 86. Of these 4 are connected to the Nikāya saṁgha: numbers 15, 72, and 80 are dedicated to the Sarvāstivādin, and number 86 is dedicated to the Mahāsāṁghika. The remaining 13 mention no particular affiliation. The following are also obviously related to the Nikāya: number 92, indicating the construction of a water hall, prapā, and donated to the Sarvāstivādin; numbers 33, 34, 55B, and 56, indicating the dedication of copper ladles, vases, etc. to the Kāśyapīya and Bahuśrutīya; and two fragments, numbers, 22 and 55A, which mention the caturdiśa-saṁgha but no particular Nikāya affiliation. Thus, altogether 11 inscriptions mention the name of a Nikāya school.

When we compare the four inscriptions related to Nikāya Buddhism with the 13 which are not, there is a formal difference between the two sets. But there are also a number of common elements and the most important is the constant

mention of the erection of stūpa and the enshrining of the relic. The term, pratiṭhavita, is always used; for example, no. 1, "... pratiṭhavid(r)a ime śarira ..."; no. 2, "... thubo pra(ti)stavito ..."; no. 13, "... śariraṁ (pra)tithaveti ...", etc. The inscriptions addressed to the Nikāya, however, add another word, parigraha, signifying the receipt; for example, no. 15 "... sarvastivat(r)ana parigrahe."; no. 72, "... sarvastivatina(ṇa) pratigrahe."; no. 80, "... sarvastivadana pari(graham)mi thubammi ..."; and no. 86, "... mahasaṁghigaṇa parigraha." In each case the ownership of the stūpa is clearly indicated. The same holds true also for ladles, vases, etc. Number 34 is the only one that does not mention parigraha among the offerings made to the Nikāya saṁgha.

In contrast to the preceding inscriptions containing parigraha, the 13 that do not mention the Nikāya saṁgha lack this word. This cannot be said with certainty for no. 14, which is very short, "sastakhadhātu," and for numbers 61 and 62, which are partially damaged, although they mention the establishment of stūpa or śarīra. The other 10 inscriptions have little damage, so it is clear that parigraha did not exist; this shows that these stūpas were not donated to the Nikāya saṁgha. But we also know by another word, danamukha (donated thing), in no. 17 that the stūpa was a donation, that it left the hands of the erecter. The question arises: who then accepted and administered the stūpas which were not offered to the Nikāya saṁgha? We know that there was a group of people besides the Nikāya Buddhists who received and took care of the stūpas.

One problem is that the term, Mahāyāna, does not appear in any of these inscriptions, although bodhisattvagrha is mentioned in no. 27, *l.* 3 and bodhisattvaśarīra in no. 82, *l.* 2. This term, however, does not seem to be very old in usage, and prior to it bodhisattvayāna was used. It is not clear whether or not the followers of bodhisattvayāna formed a definite organization at the beginning of the Christian era, but since Mahāyāna Buddhism did not distinguish between the renunciant and the housholder, such an organization was unlikely. Therefore, even though the term, Mahāyāna, does not appear in the inscriptions, this does not mean that Mahāyāna Buddhists were non-existent at the time. At any rate the Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions tell us that the stūpas ascribed to the Nikāya saṁgha were less in number than those not ascribed to them, and this fact is not entirely irrelevant to the institutional background of the rise of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

## The tradition of stūpas and its relation to the Mahāyāna Saṁgha

In the *Mahāparinibbānasuttanta*[246] of the *Dīghanikāya* Ānanda asks the Buddha, "How should we handle the Tathāgata's sarīra?" to which the Buddha replies, "O Ānanda, be not concerned with the worship of the Tathāgata's sarīra. You must strive for the highest good (sadattha)." And the Buddha continues, "There are wise men (paṇḍita) among the khattiya, brāhmaṇa, and gahapati who have faith in the Tathāgata, and they will take care of the Tathāgata's sarīra." This

passage expresses the idea that the śarīrapūjā, the worship of relics, is the concern of the laity and not the bhikṣusaṁgha. We have no evidence that the Buddha actually made this statement, but it would not be wrong to say that the bhikṣus of the early saṁgha who transmitted this suttanta approved of this idea. *Mahāparinibbānasuttanta* was compiled, based upon the traditions of the early saṁgha, and transmitted by the Nikāya Buddhists.

It is difficult to believe that the bhikṣus who revered this suttanta would actively participate in the worship of the stūpas. According to the *Mahāparinibbāna-suttanta*[247], those who actually worshipped the relics and performed the funeral were the people of the Mallā. At the funeral of the Buddha his relics were worshipped, and perfume and flowers, music and dance were offered. This form of religious service was inherited by the stūpa worshippers of the later ages. After the Buddha's death his remains were cremated, and the relics were divided into eight parts which were distributed to the eight kingdoms of middle India. They built a total of eight sarīra-thūpa,[248] and two more were erected by those who received the remaining ashes and the vase containing the remains, making 10 stūpas in middle India. It is believed that the śarīra vase excavated in Piprahwā is the relic of the śarīra stūpa worshipped by the Śākya peoples of this period.

The contents of the Pali *Mahāparinibbānasuttanta* generally agree with that[249] of the Sanskrit and the five Chinese translations. Therefore, it would not be wrong to conclude that those who cremated the Buddha's body and erected stūpas were followers among the laity. If this is accepted, then we must also accept the fact that those who administered and maintained the traditions of stūpa worship were also lay followers.

The development of stūpa worship is unclear from the erection of the original ten to the time of King Aśoka. In Aśoka's rock edict of Nigārīsāgar[250] it states that repairs were made upon the stūpa of Buddha Koṇāgamana (Konākamana, Kanakamuni). Hsuan-tsang reports[251] of seeing this rock edict in the southeast of Kapilavastu and notes that the stūpa of Kanakamuni Buddha existed nearby. He also saw the stūpa of the Buddha Krakucchanda[252] (Kakusandha) in the southwest of the stūpa of Kanakamuni Buddha and reports the existence of another rock edict erected by Aśoka. These have not been discovered as yet, but in studying Hsuan-tsang's record we may say that Aśoka's rock edict existed here also. Kanakamuni is the fifth, and Krakucchanda is the fourth of the seven past Buddhas. From this we know that already at the time of Aśoka stūpas for the past Buddhas had been erected and worshipped. The past Buddhas are mythical figures, so their stūpas could not have contained relics; they probably used replacements of some sort. This is a change in the faith of the stūpa.

A stūpa built upon relics is a type of cemetary and signifies a memorial. This type of stūpa is also built at the deaths of high priests and great rulers, and cemetaries are built for ordinary people. Stūpas of such type hold no special religious significance, but in the case of the Buddha many stūpas were erected from the very beginning, and gradually the stūpa came to be worshipped, apart from

the relics. At this stage the stūpa was no longer a cemetary or a memorial for the dead, but carried a definite religious connotation; thus, there arose the faith in the Buddha through the medium of the stūpa. Such a faith ultimately developed into a religion that taught the eternal existence of the Buddha.

Mahāyāna Buddhism is a religion centered around the Buddha, regardless of whether he is Śākyamuni, Amitāyus, or Mahāvairocana Buddha. Nikāya Buddhism in contrast is centered around the saṁgha. This obvious fact is evident from the examination of the respective doctrines. Although present-day Southern Buddhism practices pagoda-worship, the doctrines and organization of the Theravāda are still saṁgha-centered. When we consider this fact, also, it is difficult to see how Mahāyāna Buddhism could have developed from Nikāya Buddhism; it is more natural to see the beginnings of the Mahāyāna in the faith and worship of the stūpas.

According to the legends[253] of King Aśoka, he opened the eight stūpas erected at the time of Buddha's decease and, dividing the relics, erected 84,000 stūpas. Although this may be an exaggeration and therefore unreliable, it cannot be denied that Aśoka did erect many stūpas. Hsuan-tsang reports that he saw many stūpas built by Aśoka. The faith in stūpas must have made a huge advance with the conversion of Aśoka as the pivot point. Along with the popularity of stūpa worship among the laity, the Nikāya saṁgha probably was forced to adopt the practice in order to keep the followers tied to the saṁgha. At the same time the bhikṣu[254] who felt the need to express adoration of the Buddha must have participated in the worship of stūpas. At any rate it is thought that stūpa worship was adopted by the saṁgha in the Nikāya period. The reason is that stūpa worship is not mentioned in the Pali vinaya, and in the other vinayas the account relating the reason for adopting this practice is varied. In the *Pacñavargika-v.*[255] and the *Mahāsāṁghika-v.* it relates how when the Buddha passed the Toyikā 都夷婆羅門村 of Kosala, he said that the complete relics (ātmabhāva vigraha-stūpa) of the Buddha Kāśyapa were buried here and that he himself erected the stūpa in Kāśyapa's honor. With this incident as the turning point the Buddha permitted the bhikṣus to erect stūpas. Hsuantsang[256] had heard of the stūpa erected in honor of Buddha Kāśyapa and speaks of it as having been built by Aśoka. The same story occurs in the *Caturvargika-v.*,[257] but here it states that the Buddha permitted the erection of the stūpa when Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana had entered parinirvāṇa. This incident is also found in the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya-kṣudrakavastu.*[258] The *Daśabhāṇavāra-v.*[259] states that at Sudatta's request the Buddha permitted the worship of stūpas for his hair and nails.

As it is clear from the preceding, the vinayas disagree as to the reason for the origin of stūpa worship; therefore, it must have been after the Nikāya period that the saṁgha undertook stūpa worship. However, since the stūpa worship existed prior to this, we are forced to believe that the saṁgha had adopted this practice.

With the development of stūpa worship as an institution there gradually arose a distinction in rank and duties between the worshipper and the administrator of the stūpa. This meant that as the worshipper made his offerings, the duty of the

caretaker or the administrator increased and soon turned him into a professional who devoted his whole time to his task. They must have take care of the worshippers and in some cases acted as their guides. As means of increasing the number of worshippers, they must have also stressed the merits of stūpa worship and the greatness of the Buddha as a saviour. There is a deep appeal in preaching the saving powers of the Buddha to people who are unable to undertake the orthodox disciplines. When such a development occurred over a number of centuries, it was only natural that a new doctrine of salvation be developed. There is a great possibility that the original form of such Mahāyāna sūtras as the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, *Sukhāvatīvyūha*, and *Buddhāvataṁsaka* took shape in such a religious atmosphere. Stūpa worship itself cannot be called Mahāyāna Buddhism, but the first step in this direction was taken in the transformation from stūpa worship to bodhisattvayāna. The renunciant bodhisattvas who based their religious activities on the institution of the stūpa could concentrate on the disciplines and the creation of a new doctrine, supported by the offerings made to the stūpa and without worry for the material needs of life.

It is important to note that the stūpas developed a doctrine different from that of the Āgama. The Buddha spent a missionary life of over 45 years (or 50 years) throughout central India, and the great majority of the followers belonged to the laity. Thus, he left a teaching for the laity, as well as for the bhikṣus. In the extant Āgama there is very little teaching for the laity, because the transmitters of the Āgama were the renunciants who were concerned with the proper preservation of the teachings at the time when they were passed on by memory and oral repitition. It was only natural that the teachings given to the laity should become gradually lost, for the householders' life did not permit them the time and the organization of the saṁgha to concentrate on the preservation of the teaching. But from the earliest beginnings the stūpa, administered by the lay followers, existed continuously, and they must have also kept the Buddha's teachings addressed to them. It is possible to conceive of such a teaching transmitted among the administrators of the stūpa and having an entirely different historical development from the doctrines of the Āgama. When we remember that the Mahāyāna texts begin with "evaṁ mayā śrutaṁ" and claim to be the direct words of the Buddha, we cannot neglect this possibility. The Mahāyāna sūtras as we have them today are not the words of the Buddha, but there must have been a reason for them to uniformly begin, "evaṁ mayā śrutaṁ." I believe that the institution of the stūpa provides an tentative answer to this question.

We must pursue a many-angled approach to the study of the rise of Mahāyāna Buddhism, and this paper which attempts to show the importance of stūpa worship is merely a preliminary chapter. This, however, I believe will help to place Mahāyāna Buddhism in a better perspective in the historical evolution of Buddhism.

## Notes

Translated from the Japanese by Taitetsu Unno
References to the texts in the Taisho Tripiṭaka will be made in the following manner (1) name of text, (2) 卷 number when necessary, (3) abbrevation T. for Taisho, followed by the volume number, (4) text number, and (5) page number.

1 *Samayabhedoparacanacakra-śāstra*, T. 49, p. 15bc 異部宗輪論; p. 18bc 十八部論; p. 20bc 部執異論; The Tibetan Tripiṭaka, Peking Edition, ed. by D. T. Suzuki (Tokyo-Kyoto, 1960), no. 5639, vol. 127, p. 250–3 (170b. f).
2 維摩詰所說經 T. 14, no. 465, p. 538a, and no. 476, p. 558c. The Sarvāstivādin opposed the idea of the single message of one voice. *Mahāvibhāṣā-śāstra* 大毘婆沙論 79, T. 27, no. 1745, p. 410a.
3 *Mahāvastu*, vol. 1, p. 63f.
4 cf. footnote 68.
5 Jones states that the daśabhūmi theory was a borrowing interpolated in the *Mahāvastu*. Cf. J. J. Jones, *The Mahavastu*, vol 1, (London, 1949), p. xiii.
6 *Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sāstra* (*MPP-sāstra*) 2, T. 25, no. 1509, p. 69c. E. Lamotte, *Le traité grande vertu de sagesse*, Tome I (Louvain, 1944), p. 103.
7 *Dasabhāṇavāra-vinaya* 十誦律 60, T. 23, no. 1435, p. 449a; *Mūlasarvāstivāda-kṣudrakavastu* 根本說一切有部毘奈耶雜事 39, T. 24, no. 1451, p. 407bc.
8 *Mahāsāṁghika-vinaya* 摩訶僧祇律 32, T. 22, no. 1425, p. 491c; J Przyluski, *Le concile de Rājagṛha* (Paris, 1927), p. 211.
9 *MPP-śāstra* 2, T. 25, no. 1509, p. 69c.; Lamotte, *op. cit.*, p. 104f; Matsumoto Bunzaburo 松本文三郎, 佛典の研究 (Kyoto, 1941).
10 *MPP-śāstra* 2, T. 25, p. 70a. Lamotte, *ibid*, p. 106.
11 Wogihara Unrai 荻原雲來 showed that 蜫勒 is an error for 毗勒 (*pheḷā*), and inferred its connection with *Peṭakopaáesa*; 荻原雲來文集, p. 392. However, there is only a partial agreement between the organization of 毗勒 in the *MPP-śāstra* and that of the *Peṭakopadesa* and no real, intimate connection between the two can be found. Cf. Mizuno Kogen 水野弘元 "Peṭakopadesa について", *Journal of Indian and Buddhist Studies* (*JIBS, Indogaku-Bukkyogaku Kenkyu* 印度學佛教學研究), vol. VII, no. 2, p. 56f.
12 There are various theories concerning the *Śāriputrābhidharma* 舍利弗阿毘曇. Nāgārjuna considers it to be part of Vātsīputrīya 犢子部; and 道標, author of the preface to its Chinese translation, states that it belongs to the Sarvāsitvādin, T. 28, p. 525b.; 吉藏, according to the *MPP-śāstra*, states that it belongs to the Vātsīputrīya in 三論玄義. T. 45, p. 9c.; 窺基 states that it is a transmission of the Sammatīya 正量部 in 妙法蓮華經玄贊 1, T. 34, no. 1723, p. 657a; 鳳潭, following 窺基, also ascribes it to the Sammatīya, *Bukkyo Taikei* 佛教大系, 頭書三論玄義, p. 252.; Kimura Taiken 木村泰賢 discussed the intimate connections of this work with the Pali *Vibhaṅga* and *Puggalapaññatti* and showed concepts common with the Vātsīputrīya, Mahāsāṁghika, Sarvāstivādin, and Vaibhadyavādin, but did not reach any conclusion concerning its affiliation. Cf. 木村泰賢, 阿毘達磨論の研究 (Tokyo, 1920), p. 67f.
13 Modern Japanese scholars agree that the affiliation of this work cannot be readily determined. Shiio Benkyo 椎尾辨匡, "六足論の發達", in 宗教界 vol. 10 (Tokyo, 1914), p. 628f.; Watanabe Baiyu 渡邊楳雄, "舍利弗阿毘曇論解題" in *Kokuyaku-issaikyo* 國譯一切經, 毘曇部 19 (Tokyo, 1934); Nishi Yoshio 西義雄, "舍利弗阿毘曇論の部派佛教における資料的地位" in 宮本正尊教授還曆紀念印度學佛教學論集 (Tokyo, 1954), p. 218f.
14 *MPP-śāstra* 11, T. 25, p. 138a. Lamotte, *op. cit.*, Tome II, p. 641.
15 *Ibid.*, 18, T. 25, p. 191a, 721a. Lamotte, *Ibid.*, Tome II, p. 1067.

16 *Ibid.*, 18, T. 25, p. 191a. Lamotte, *ibid.*, Tome II, p. 1068.
17 *Ibid.*, 40, T. 25, p. 349c.
18 *Ibid.*, 21, T. 25, p. 218b.
19 *Ibid.*, 32, T. 25, p. 296bc.
20 *Ibid.*, 23, T. 25, p. 232cf.
21 *Ibid.*, 36, T. 25, p. 324b.
22 Concerning the navāṅga and the dvādaśāṅga, see the excellent article by Professor Mizuno Kogen, "大乘經典の性格" in Miyamoto, ed., 大乘佛教の成立史的研究 (Tokyo, 1954), p. 284f. This paper is indebted to his ideas, but there are some points of disagreement also.
23 The Pāli Āgama lists the navāṅga in various places. 1. sutta, 2. geyya, 3. veyyākaraṇa, 4. gāthā, 5. udāna, 6. itivuttaka, 7. jātaka, 8. abbhūtadhamma, 9. vedalla. E. g. *Majjhima-N.* vol. I, p. 133; *Aṅguttara-N.*, vol. II, pp. 103, 178; III, pp. 86, 87, 177, 361, 362.
24 摩訶僧祇律 1, T. 22, no. 1425, p. 227b. Cf. footnote 51.
25 The Sarvāstivādin treatises, e.g., 集異門足論 14, T. 26, no. 1536, p. 427c; 大毘婆沙論 126, T. 27, no. 1545, p. 659c; 阿毘曇毘婆沙論 1, T. 28, no. 1546, p. 2b; 順正理論 44, T. 29, no. 1562, p. 595a.
26 五分律 1, T. 22, no. 1421, p. 1c. 27. 四分律 1, T. 22, no. 1428, p. 569b.
28 根本說一切有部毘奈耶雜事 38, T. 24, no. 1451, p. 398c. However, the Sanskrit and Tibetan translation, published by E. Waldschmidt, differs from the Chinese order, and lists the dvādaśāṅga in the same order as the Sarvāstivādin. Waldschmidt, *Das Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra*, Teil III (Berlin, 1951), pp. 386, 387.; Tibetan, no. 1035, vol. 44, p. 231, 2, lines 1–2.
29 大毘婆沙論 33, T. 25, no. 1509, p. 306cf.
30 雜阿含 41, T. 2, no. 99, p. 300c.
31 摩訶般若波羅蜜經 (大品般若) 5, T. 8, no. 223, p. 256a. However, the Sanskrit *Pañcaviṁśatisāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, Calcutta Oriental Series 28, (London, 1934), p. 31, gives the dvādaśāṅga order different from the Chinese translation.
32 解深密經 3, T. 16, no. 676, p. 698a; no. 675, p. 674b.; Tibetan 影印北京版大藏經, vol. 29, p. 13 (28b, lines 2–4).
33 大般涅槃經 15, T. 12, no. 374, p. 451b, and T. 12, no. 375, p. 693b.
34 大方等大集經 16, T. 13, no. 397, p. 109c.
35 大悲經 5, T. 12, no. 380, p. 968b.
36 華手經 2, T. 16, no. 657, p. 137a.
37 *MPP-śāstra* 33, T. 25, no. 1509, p. 306cf.
38 瑜伽師地論 81, T. 30, no. 1579, p. 753af.
39 顯揚聖教論 6, T. 31, no. 1602, p. 508cf.
40 大乘阿毘達磨集論 6, T. 31, no. 1605, p. 686af.
41 *Mahāvyutpatti*, (R. Sakaki, ed.), no. 62 p. 97.
42 成實論 1, T. 32, no. 1646, p. 244c.
43 五分律 1, T. 22, no. 1421, p. 1c. Although the original form of the dvādaśāṅga may have been formed by adding nidāna, avadāna, and upadeśa to the navāṅga (cf. footnote 51) found in 摩訶僧祇律, there is no text which indicates this order. In the 五分律 nidāna is place between udāna and itivṛttaka. The reason is that probably the order of udāna-nidāna may have aided the memory of the dvādaśāṅga. We may consider the order in the 五分律 as being the oldest, extant form. The Sarvāstivādin shifted avadāna to seventh, as follows: ... udāna, nidāna, avadāna, itivṛttaka, etc. This was also done probably to facilitate memory. Thus the order of the Sarvāstivādin dvādaśāṅga may be considered to be later than the Mahīśāsaka order. However, Maeda Egaku 前田惠學 sees the order of the dvādaśāṅga in Chinese Dīrgha-Āgama, as follows: ... udāna, itivuttaka, nidāna, jātaka, etc., and considers it

to be the oldest form. Cf. Maeda, 前田惠學 "九分教の itivuttaka の原意" in 東方學論集 7, (1962), p. 321. But I cannot agree to his identification of the order of the dvādaśāṅga in the Dīrgha-Āgama, cf. footnote 47.

44 根本說一切有部毘奈耶雜事 38, T. 24, no. 1451, p. 398c. Cf. footnote 28.

45 大般若波羅蜜多經, 初分 3, 127, T. 5, no. 220, pp. 15b, 699a: 第 2 分 402, T. 7, p. 9c; 第 3 分 479, T. 7, p. 431c. Tibetan, vol. 12, p. 16, 61b, lines 5ff,; vol. 14, p. 147, 264b, lines 5ff.

46 大方廣佛華嚴經 12, T. 9, no. 278, p. 478a; and 21, T. 10, no. 279, p. 114af.

47 四分律 1, T. 22, no. 1428, p. 569b.

48 長阿含 3, 12, T. 1, no. 1, pp. 16c, 74b.

49 光讚經 1, T. 8, no. 222, p. 150cf. However, in the same work, 7, p. 197a an entirely different order of the dvādaśāṅga is given. This order cannot be found in any other sūtra.

50 Dutt, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

51 摩訶僧祇律 1, T. 22, no. 1425, p. 1c. The order of the navāṅga in the *Mahāsāmghika-v.* is identical with that of the *Mahāyāna-mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*, and even in the case of dvādaśāṅga many contain the vaipulya-adbhūtadharma order; therefore, the *Mahāsāṁghika-v.* navāṅga may be thought to be older than the Pali. Cf. footnote, 43.

52 Cf. footnote 23.

53 增一阿含 17, 21, 33, 46, 48, T. 2, no. 125, pp. 635a, 657a, 728c, 794b, 813a.

54 大般涅槃經 3, T. 12, no. 374, p. 383c, and no. 375, p. 623b.

55 法華經 1, T. 9, no. 262, p. 7c; and no 264, p. 140c. However, the 正法華經 T. 9, no. 263, p. 70a, does not carry the navāṅga. It exists in the Sanskrit and the Tibetan translation. Kern and Nanjio, *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-sūtra*, p. 45, and Tibetan, no. 781, vol. 30, p. 11, 2, lines 3–4.

56 十住毘婆沙論 9, T. 26, no. 1521, p. 69a.

57 *Ibid.*, 9, 10, 26, T. 26, no. 1521, pp. 69b, 73b, 73c, 75b, 107c. Cf. Hirakawa Akira 平川彰 "十住毘婆論の著者について" in *JIBS*, vol. V., no. 2, p. 176f.

58 大般若波羅蜜多經 491, T. 7, no. 220, p. 494a.

59 十住毘婆沙論 16, T. 26, no. 1521, p. 108c.

60 *Ibid.*, 16, T. 26, p. 108c.

61 *Ibid.*, 1, T. 26, p. 25a.

62 律二十二明了論, T. 24, no. 1461, p. 665b.

63 十住毘婆沙論 11, T. 26, p. 80b.

64 *Ibid.*, 12, t. 26, p. 85b.

65 The following articles are excellent studies on the daśabhūmi theory: Kuno Horyu 久野芳隆 "菩薩十地思想の起源開展及び內容" in 大正大學學報, nos. 6–7, (Tokyo, 1930), p. 63f; Miyamoto Shoson 宮本正尊, 大乘と小乘 (Tokyo, 1944), pp. 568–583; Mizuno Kogen 水野弘元 "十地說の展開 in Miyamoto, ed., 大乘佛教の成立史的研究 (Tokyo, 1954), pp. 276–284; Kajiyoshi Koun 梶芳光運 "菩薩十地思想について" 宮本正尊教授還曆紀念印度學佛教學論集 (Tokyo, 1954), pp. 245–256; Yamada Ryujo 山田龍城, 大乘佛教成立論序說 (Tokyo, 1959) pp. 223–310. I am especially indebted to Professor Mizuno's studies, but I have gathered new materials and attempted a new interpretation.

66 *Mahāvastu*, vol. I, p. 63f. J.J. Jones, *The Mahāvastu*, vol. I, p. 53f.

67 修行本起經 I, T. 3, no. 184, p. 463a; 過去現在因果經 1, T. 3, no. 189, p. 623a; 太子瑞應本起經 1, T. 3, no. 185, p. 473b. 方廣大莊嚴經 2, T. 3, no. 187, p. 550b.

68 J. Rahder, *Daśabhūmikasūtra* (Paris, 1926), p. 5. 大方廣佛華嚴經 22, T. 9, no. 278, p. 542c; and 34, T. 10, no. 279, p. 179b; 漸備一切智德經 1, T. 10, no. 285, p. 458c; 十住經 1, T. 10, no. 286, p. 498bc; 十地經 1, T. 10, no. 287, p. 536b.

69 The Sanskrit of daśa-vyavasthāna is quoted in the *Gaṇḍavyūha*. Cf. D. T. Suzuki and H. Idzmi, ed., *The Gaṇḍavyūha Sūtra* (Kyoto, 1934), p. 94. The doctrinal expla-

nation of the daśa-vyavasthāna, however, is found in the following texts: 大方廣佛華嚴經208, T. 8, no. 278, pp. 444c–5a; and 16, T. 10, no. 279, p. 84a; 菩薩本業經 T. 10, no. 281, p. 449c; 菩薩十住行道品, T. 10, no. 283, p. 454c; 大方廣總持寶光明經 1, T. 10, no. 299, p. 886b; 最勝問菩薩十住除垢斷結經 1–3, T. 10, no. 309, pp. 967–988.

70 *Mahāvastu*, vol. I, p. 76.

71 小品般若經 8, T. 8, no. 227, p. 575b; 道行般若經 8, T. 8, no. 224, p. 465ac; 大明度經 5, T. 8, no. 225, p. 501a; 大般若波羅蜜多經, 第 5 會 564, T. 7, no. 22, p. 914c; 放光般若經 15, T. 8, no. 221, p. 101c; 摩訶般若波羅蜜經 15, T. 8, no. 223, p. 358c; 大般若波羅蜜多經, 初會 34, T. 6, no. 220, pp. 752c–3a; 第 2 會 456, T. 7, p. 302a. The following are not prajñā-pāramitā texts, but they contain explanations on the four types of bodhisattva: 文殊師利問署經, T. 14, no. 458, p. 435b; 文殊師利問菩提經, T. 14, no. 464, p. 482b; 伽耶山頂經, T. 14, no. 465, p. 485a; 大乘伽耶山頂經, T. 14, no. 467, p. 490c; 象頭精舍經, T. 14, no. 466, p. 487c; 大方等大集經 10, T. 13, no. 397, p. 67a; Yamada Ryujo 山田龍成, *op. cit.* pp. 212, 215, 244; Mizuno Kogen, *op. cit.*, p. 283. Dr. Hikata Ryusho believes that these four types of bodhisattva were formulated by receiving the influence of the four stages of bodhisattva practice in the *Mahāvastu* (vol. I, p. 3); namely, praktiṛcaryā, praṇidhānacaryā, anulomacaryā, anivartanacaryā. Cf. Hikata, 干潟龍祥, 本生經類の思想史的研究 (*A Historical Study of the Thoughts in Jātakas and Similar Stories*), (Tokyo, 1954), p. 94.

72 自誓三昧經, T. 15, no. 622, p. 345a; 如來獨證自誓三昧經, T. 15, no. 622, p. 347b.

73 摩訶般若波羅蜜經 6, T. 8, no. 223, pp. 256c–257c; 放光般若經 4, T. 8, no. 221, p. 27a; 光讚經 7, T. 8, no. 222, pp. 196b–197a; 大般若波羅蜜多經 415–416, T. 7, no. 220, p. 82cf; and 490–491, T. 7, p. 490bf. *Śatasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā*, p. 1454f.

74 MPP-śāstra 49, T. 25, p. 411af.

75 大般若波羅蜜多經 3, T. 5, no. 220, p. 14a: and 442 and 483, T. 7, pp. 230c, 454b.

76 Dutt, *Pañcavimśatiśatasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, p. 225, line 16f. In this Sanskrit text, however, the first, śuklavidarśana, is eliminated and śrāvakbhūmi is inserted in the seventh place. 摩訶般若波羅蜜經 6, T. 8, no. 223, p. 259c; 放光般若經 4, T. 8, no. 221, p. 29b; 光讚經 7, T. 8, no. 222, p. 199a; 大般若波羅蜜多經, 第 會 T. 7, no. 220, p. 88c; Pratapa Candra Ghoṣa, *Śatasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā*, p. 1473; Yamada Ryujo, *op. cit.*, p. 271.

77 大毘婆沙論 28, T. 27, no 1545, p. 147bc.

78 Identical to footnote 77.

79 毘尼母經 1, T. 24, no. 1463, p. 801b.

80 *Ibid.*, 8, T. 24, p. 850b.

81 十誦律 36, T. 23, no 1434, p. 263a.

82 大毘婆沙論 178, T. 27, no. 1545, p. 892a.

83 *Ibid.*, 178, T. 27, p. 892b.

84 *Mahāvastu*, vol. III, p. 226, lines 2f.

85 Identical to footnote 71.

86 小品般若波羅蜜經 2, T. 8, no. 227, p. 541c; 道行般若經 2, T. 8, no. 224, p. 433c; 般若心經 (*Prajñāpāramitā-hṛdayasūtra*) states:

> "yaḥ kaścic chāriputra kulaputro vā kuladuhitā vā gambhīrāyāṁ prajñāpāramitāyāṁ caryāṁ cartukāmas tenaivaṁ vyavalokayitavyaṁ."

Cf. Max Müller and B. Nanjio, *The Ancient Palm-leaves Containing the Prajñāpāramitā-Hridaya-sūtra and the Ushnīsha-Vijaya-Dhāranī*, (Oxford, 1884), p. 52. The opening sentences of the *Vajracchedikā* also states:

> "tat katham Bhagavan bodhisattvayāna-samprasthitena kulaputreṅa vā kuladuhitrā vā sthātavyaṁ kathaṁ pratipattavyaṁ kathaṁ cittaṁ pragrahītavyaṁ."

Cf. E. Conze, ed., (1957), p. 28; 般若波羅蜜多心經, T. 8, no. 253, p. 849c; no. 254, p. 850a; no. 255, p. 850c; 金剛般若波羅蜜經, T. 8, no. 235, p. 748c; no. 236, p. 757b; and no. 237, p. 762a.

87 阿彌陀經, T. 12, no. 366, p. 347b; and no. 367, p. 350a. Max Müller and B. Nanjio, *Sukhāvatī-vyūha, Description of Sukhāvatī the Land of Bliss* (Oxford, 1883), p. 92.

88 Kern and Nanjio, *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-sūtra*, p. 225; 妙法蓮華經, T. 9, no. 262, p. 30c; no. 264, p. 165b. Many instances of kulaputra and kuladuhitṛ are found throughout this sūtra; for example, pp. 260, 338, 339, 345, 354, 366, etc. Kumarajīva translates. 善男子, 善女人 but Dharmarakṣa translates this as 族姓子, 族姓女. T. 9, nos. 262, 263, 264, pp. 30c, 31c, 35a, 45b, 45c, 46b, 46c, 47c, 48b, 49b, 49c, 50a; 100c, 105c, 117a, 118a, 119ab, 120a, 121b, 121c, 122a; 165b, 166b, 169b, 179c, 180ac, 181c, 182ab, 183a, 184a, etc.

89 *DN* 3, vol. I, pp. 93, 94; 長阿含經 13, T. 1, no. 1, p. 82c.

90 *Vinayapiṭaka*, vol. I, p. 15; 四分律 32, T. 22, no. 1428, p. 789b. Translated as 族姓子. This word is lacking in 五分律 15, T. 22, no. 1421, p. 105a.

91 This expression is found frequently in the Chinese Āgamas; for example, 雜阿含經, 2, 4, 6, 10, 15, 34, etc., T. 2, no. 99, pp. 12a, 25c, 40b. 72a, 73abc, 106a, 250a, etc. Parallel expression in Pali would be as follows:

> "ye hi keci bhikkhave atītam addhānam kulaputtā sammā agārasmā anagāriyam pabbajiṁsu, sabbe te catunnam ariyasaccānam yathābhūtam abhisamayāya."

Cf. *SN*, vol. V, p. 415. Cf. *SN*, vol. III, pp. 93, 179, 180; *Vinayapiṭaka*, vol. I, p. 9. Examples of calling upāsaka and upāsikā as 善男子 and 善女人 are found in the following: 雜阿含經 32, 37, 38, T. 2, no. 99, pp. 233a, 271b, 278c; 增一阿含經 16, 21, 24, 34, 37, 38, T. 2, no. 125, pp. 625ac, 656b, 674b, 741c, 755b, 756c.

The translations, 族姓子, 族姓男, and 族姓女 are found frequently in 中阿含經, T. no. 26 and 增一阿含經 T. no. 125. E.g., T. 1, pp. 428a, 457b, 458a, 474c, etc.

The use of kulaputra and kuladuhitṛ occur frequently in the Chinese Āgama compared to the Pali, but the number is insignificantly small when compared to the Mahāyāna texts.

When the upasaṁpadā ordination was given, questions were directed to the renunciant who was addressed as kulaputra. Cf. 四分律 35, T. 22, no. 1248, pp. 814c, 815a; 摩訶僧祇律 23, 30, T. 22, no. 1245, pp. 413b, 472c; 十誦律 21, T. 23, no. 1435, p. 156a. But this term is not used in the upasaṁpadā ceremony found in the Pali vinaya and the *Pañcavargika-vinaya*. Cf. *Vinayapiṭaka*, vol. I, p. 94f; 五分律 17, T. 22, no. 1421, p. 119cf. Even in cases of kulaputra usage in the Dharmaguptaka, Sarvāstivādin, and Mahāsāṁghika, this term is not used in the Theravāde and the Mahīśāsaka.

92 The usage of kuladhītā in Pali is very rare. *Vinayapiṭaka*, vol. II, p. 10, and vol. III, p. 180.

93 南海寄歸內法傳 1, T. 54, no. 2125, p. 205c.

94 Wogihara, *Bodhisattvabhūmi* (Tokyo, 1930), p. 138. 瑜伽師地論 40, T. 30, no. 1579, p. 511; 菩薩地持經 4, T. 30, no. 1581, p. 910b; 菩薩善戒經 4, T. 30, no. 1582, p. 982c.

95 Although the number of śikṣāpada in the *Vinayapiṭaka* is referred to as being 250 in China and Japan and also occurs in various śāstras, accurately speaking the exact number differs with the various schools. Cf. Hirakawa Akira, 律藏の研究 (Tokyo, 1960), pp. 434, 493.

96 MPP-śāstra, 13, T. 25, no. 1509, pp. 160c–161a; Lamotte, *op. cit.*, Tome II, p. 839f.

97 *Ibid.*, T. 25, p. 161bc; Lamotte, *ibid.*, p. 846f.

98 *Ibid.*, 46, T. 25, pp. 393b, 395b.

99 Hikata, *Suvikrāntavikrāmi-paripṛcchā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra, An Introductory Essay on Prajñāpāramitā Literature* (Fukuoka, Japan, 1958), p. LII, f.

100 I have demonstrated that the two works are by different authors; cf. Hirakawa, "毘婆沙論の著者について" in *JIBS*, vol. V, no. 2 (1957), p. 176f.

101 道行般若經 6, T. 8, no. 224, p. 454bc; 大明度經 4, T. 8, no. 225, p. 494c; 摩訶般若鈔經 4, T. 8, no. 226, p. 526c; 小品般若波羅蜜經 6, T. 8, no. 227, p. 564a; 佛母出生三法藏般若波羅蜜多經 16, T. 8, no. 228, p. 641b; 大般若波羅蜜多經, 第 4 會 549, T. 7, no. 220, p. 826a.; R. Mitra, *Ashṭasāhasrikā*, p. 324, Calcutta, 1888.

102 放光般若經 3, T. 8, no. 221, p. 21b.

103 光讚經 6, T. 8, no. 222, p. 186a.

104 摩訶般若波羅蜜經 5, T. 8, no. 223, pp. 248a, 250a.

105 大般若波羅蜜多經, 第 2 會 413, T. 7, no. 220, p. 72c.

106 Foa example, *DN*. vol. III, pp. 269, 290, 291; *SN*. XIV, 27, vol. II, p. 168; *AN*. X. 176, vol. V, pp. 263–268; 長阿含經 9, T. 1, no. 1, p. 57a; 中阿含經 3, T. 1, no. 26, p. 440a; 雜阿含經 37, T. 2, no. 99, p. 272a–273a; 增一阿含經 43, 44, T. 2, no. 125, pp. 781a, 785c.

107 Rahder, *Daśabhūmikasūtra*, pp. 23–25; 漸備一切智德經 1, T. 10, no. 285, p. 465c; 十住經 1, T. 10, no. 286, p. 504bc; 大方廣佛華嚴經 24, T. 9, no. 278, p. 548c; and 35, T. 10, no. 279, p. 185ab; 十地經 2, T. 10, no. 287, p. 543a. In the Buddhāvataṁsaka the daśakuśala is taught in various places: 41, 12, T. 9, no. 278, pp. 660a, 475ab; and 21, 58, T. 10, no. 279, pp. 111c, 305a. 度世品經 5, T. 10, no. 292, p. 645a.

108 十地經論 4, T. 26, no. 1522, p. 145c.

109 十住毘婆沙論 14–16, T. 26, no. 1521, pp. 95–108.

110 大方廣佛華嚴經 18, T. 9, no. 278, p. 513ab; and 27, T. 9, no. 279, p. 149bc. Tibetan vol. 25, p. 197, "sdom pa gsum rnam par dag pa."

111 *Manusmṛti*, XII, 3–7. Cf. G. Bühler, *The Law of Manu*, S.B.E., vol. XXV, p. 483.

112 *Mahābhārata*, XIII, *Anuśāsanaparvan*, 13.

113 Śāntideva, *Śikṣāsamuccaya*. ed. by C. Bendall, (St. Petersburg, 1902), pp. 11, 17, 18, 20, 34, 36, 55, 125, 144, 188.

114 Bendall, *ibid.*, p. 190.

115 *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, II. 64; III. 22, etc.; IV. 1, 25, 48; V. 1, 42, 46, 99ff, etc.

116 Dutt, *Bodhisattvaprātimokṣasūtraṁ* (1931).

117 Dutt, *ibid.*, p. 27, line 8.

118 Dutt, *ibid.*, p. 20.

119 決定毘尼經, T. 12, no. 325, pp. 39c–40c. 大寶積經優波離會 90, T. 11, no. 310, pp. 516c–517c.

120 十住毘婆沙論 5, T. 26, no. 1521, p. 41a.

121 Wogihara, *Bodhisattvabhūmi*, pp. 158–180; 瑜伽師地論 40, 41, T. 10, no. 1579, pp. 515b–521a; 菩薩地持經 5, T. 30, no. 1581, pp. 913a–917a; 菩薩善戒經, T. 30, no. 1583, pp. 1015a–1017c.

122 菩薩內戒經, T. 24, no. 1487, pp. 1029bc.

123 優婆塞戒經 3, T. 24, no. 1488, pp. 1049a–1050b.

124 梵網經盧舍那佛說菩薩心地戒品, T. 24, no. 1484, pp. 1004c–1009b.

125 A detailed discussion of this problem is found in Mochizuki Shinko 望月信亨, 佛教經典成立史論 p. 441f. (Kyoto, 1947).

126 Wogihara, *Bodhisattvabhūmi*, p. 152f; 瑜伽師地論 40, T. 30, no. 1579, p. 514bf; 菩薩地持經 5, T. 30, no. 1581, p. 912bf; 菩薩善戒經, T. 30, no. 1583, p. 1014af.

127 菩隆戒本, T. 24, no. 1500, p. 1107f, and no. 1501, p. 1110f.

128 菩隆羯磨文, T. 24, no. 1499, no. 1104.

129 Conze, *Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā*, p. 27; 金剛般若波羅蜜經, T. 8, no. 235, p. 748c; no. 236, pp. 752c, 757a; no. 237, p. 762a; 金剛能斷般若波羅蜜經, T. 8,

no. 238, p. 766c; 能斷金剛般若波羅蜜多經, T. 8, no. 239, p. 771c; 大般若波羅蜜多經, 第 9 能斷金剛分 577, T. 7, no. 220, p. 980a.
130 小品般若波羅蜜經 1, T. 8, no. 227, p. 537a; 摩訶般若鈔經 1, T. 8, no. 226, p. 508b; 大般若波羅蜜多經, 第 4 會 538, T. 7, no. 220, p. 763b. R. Mitra, *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* (Calcutta, 1888), p. 3; Conze, tr. (Calcutta, 1958), p. 1.
131 道行般若經 1, T. 8, no. 224, p. 425c; 大明度經 1, T. 8, no. 225, p. 478b; 20 大般若波羅蜜多經, 第 5 會 556, T. 7, no. 220, p. 865c.
132 Suzuki and Idzumi, *Gaṇḍavyūha-sūtra*, p. 2 Cf. footnote 133.
133 Rahder, *Daśabhūmikasūtra*, p. 1; 大方廣佛華嚴經 23, T. 9, no. 278, p. 542a; and 34, T. 10, no. 279, p. 178c; 漸備一切智德經 1, T. 10, no. 285, p. 458a 十住經 1, T. 10, no. 286, p. 497c; 十地經 1, T. 10, no. 287, p. 535b.
134 Kern and Nanjio, *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra*, p. 337; 正法華經 8, T. 9, no. 263, p. 117a. But not found in 妙法蓮華經 5, T. 9, no. 262, p. 45b.
135 *Ibid.*, p. 221; 妙法蓮華經 4, T. 9, no. 262, p. 30b; 正法華經 5, T. 9, no. 263, pp. 98c–99a; 添品妙法蓮華經 4, T. 9, no. 264, p. 164c.
136 *Ibid.*, examples of bodhisattvagaṇa usage: pp. 298, 311, 315, 316, 387, 457, and 487; examples of bodhisattvarāśi usage: pp. 311, 316.
137 *Ibid.*, p. 226; 妙法蓮華經 5, T. 9, no. 262, p. 37ab; 正法華經 7, T. 9, no. 263, p. 107bc; 添品妙法蓮華經 5, T. 9, no. 264, p. 171c.
138 Müller and Nanjio, *The Smaller Sukhāvatīvyūha*, p. 96; 稱讚淨土佛攝受經, T. 12, no. 367, p. 350a; 阿彌陀經 T. 12, no. 366, p. 347b.
139 Müller and Nanjio, *The Sukhāvatīvyūha-sūtra*, pp. 63–4. This is not translated directly into the Chinese; T. 12, nos. 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, pp. 278a, 298c, 316c, 325a, 338a; and 18, T. 11, no. 310, p. 99c.
140 大智度論 34, T. 25, no. 1509, p. 311c; 十住毘婆沙論 8, T. 26, no. 1521, p. 64c.
141 十住毘婆沙論 7, T. 26, no. 1521, p. 55a.
142 法鏡經, T. 12, no. 322, p. 16a; 郁伽羅越問菩薩行經, T. 12, no. 323, p. 23c; 大寶積經郁伽長者會 82, T. 11, no. 310, p. 473a.
143 十住毘婆沙論 7, T. 26, no. 1521, pp. 55b.
144 *Ibid.*, 1, T. 26, no. 1521, p. 20a.
145 *Ibid.*, 1, T. 26, no. 1521, p. 22b.
146 摩訶般若波羅蜜經 1, T. 8, no. 223, p. 221a.
147 大智度論 34, T. 25, no. 1509, p. 311bc.
148 For example, 大智度論 3, T. 25, no. 1509, p. 80a: "Within this the real śrāvakasaṁgha numbers 6,500 members and the bodhisattva saṁgha consists of two types, hrīmat saṁgha (有羞僧) and bhūta-saṁgha (實僧)" Lamotte's translation lacks this sentence, *op. cit.*, Tome 1, p. 203.
149 道行般若經 1, T. 8, no. 224, p. 425c.
150 Taisho Tripiṭaka ascribes the translation of this sūtra to 曇摩蜱 and 竺佛念, but this is erroneous. The translation is by 竺法護. Cf. Kajiyoshi Koun, 原始般若經の研究, p. 77f.
151 *DN.*, vol. 1, pp. 47f, 132f. Jaina also uses saṁghin, gaṇin. Cf. *Uttarādhyayana* 26. SBE., vol. XLV, p. 149, gaṇadhara; Ācārāṅga, SBE. vol. XXII, p. 113, etc.
152 In the second-century Chinese Translation of the *Ugradattaparipṛcchā-sūtra* stūpa and āraṇyāyatana are listed and explained as the places of the bodhisattva's daily activities. 法鏡經 (tr. 167–189), T. 12, no. 322, p. 20a; 郁伽羅越問菩薩行經 (tr. 265–308), T. 12, no. 323, p. 28a; 大寶積經郁伽長者會 82 (tr. 5th cent.), T. 11, no. 310, p. 477c.
153 Kern and Nanjio, *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-sūtra*, p. 6f; 妙法蓮華經 1, T. 9, no. 262, p. 2bf; 正法華經 1, T. 9, no. 263, p. 63cf; 添品妙法蓮華經, T. 9, no. 264, p. 135bf.
154 *Ibid.*, p. 15, verse 45f; 妙法蓮華經 1, T. 9, no. 262, p. 3b; 正法華經 1, T. 9, no. 263, p. 61b; 添品妙法蓮華經 1, T. 9, no. 264, p. 135b.

155 *Ibid.*, p. 26, verse 84f; 妙法蓮華經 1, T. 9, no. 262, p. 5a; 正法華經 1, T. 9, no. 263, p. 67b; 添品妙法蓮華經 1, T. 9, no. 264, p. 138a.
156 *Ibid.*, p. 50, verse 78f; 妙法蓮華經 1, T. 9, no. 262, p. 8c; 正法華經 1, T. 9, no. 263, p. 71a; 添品妙法蓮華經, T. 9, no. 264, p. 141c.
157 *Ibid.*, p. 50, verse 82; 妙法蓮華經 1, T. 9, ho. 262, p. 8c; 正法華經 1, T. 9, no. 263, p. 71b; 添品妙法蓮華經 1, T. 9, no. 264, p. 141c.
158 *Ibid.*, p. 53, verse 94f; 妙法蓮華經 1, T. 9, no. 262, p. 9a; 正法華經 1, T. 9, no. 263, p. 71c; 添品妙法蓮華經 1, T. 9, no. 264, p. 142a.
159 *Ibid.*, pp. 150–155; 妙法蓮華經 3, T. 9, no. 262, pp. 21b–22a; 正法華經 3, T. 9, no. 263, pp. 87b–88a; 添品妙法蓮華經 3, T. 9, no. 264, p. 156ac.
160 *Ibid.*, p. 340; 妙法蓮華經 5, T. 9, no. 262, p. 46a; 正法華經 8, T. 9, no. 263, p. 117a, lacks this section; 添品妙法蓮華經 5, T. 9, no. 264, p. 180a.
161 *Ibid.*, p. 339; 妙法蓮華經 5, T. 9, no. 262, p. 45b; 正法華經 8, T. 9, no. 263, p. 117a; 添品妙法蓮華經 5, T. 9, no. 264, p. 179c.
162 pp. 340–344; 妙法蓮華經 5, T. 9, no. 262, p. 46ab; 正法華經 8, T. 9, no. 263, p. 117bc; 添品妙法蓮華經 5, T. 9, no. 264, p. 180ab.
163 *Ibid.*, p. 344, verse 60; 妙法蓮華經 5, T. 9, no. 262, p. 45b; 正法華經 8, T. 9, no. 263, p. 107c; 添品妙法蓮華經 5, T. 9, no. 264, p. 180b.
164 *Ibid.*, p. 274, verse, 17; 妙法蓮華經 4, T. 9, no. 262, p. 36c; 正法華經 6, T. 9, no. 263, p. 107a; 添品妙法蓮華經 4, T. 9, no. 264, p. 171b.
165 *Ibid.*, p. 410f; 妙法蓮華經 6, T. 9, no. 262, p. 53c; 正法華經 9, T. 9, no. 263, pp. 125c–126a; 添品妙法蓮華經 206, T. 9, no. 264, p. 188bc.
166 Concerning the funeral of Śākyamuni, cf. *Mahāparinibbānasuttanta, DN.*, vol. 1, p. 159f; E. Waldschmidt, *Das Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra*, Teill III (Berlin, 1951), p. 404f; 長阿含 3, T. 1, no. 1, p. 20bf; 佛般泥洹經, T. 1, no. 5, p. 172cf; 般泥洹經, T. 1, no. 6, p. 189af; 大般涅槃經, T. 1, no. 7, p. 205cf.
167 Kern and Nanjio, *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-sūtra*, p. 239f; 妙法蓮華經 4, T. 9, no. 262, p. 32b; 正法華經 6, T. 9, no. 263, p. 102b; 添品妙法蓮華經 4, T. 9, no. 264, p. 166cf.
168 *Ibid.*, pp. 316, 323f; 妙法蓮華經 5, T. 9, no. 262, pp. 42c, 43bf; 正法華經 7, T. 9, no. 263, pp. 113b, 114cf; 添品妙法蓮華經 5, T. 9, no. 264, pp. 176c, 177cf.
169 The Abhidharma teaches that merits of stūpa-worship are small: "caitye tyāgānvayaṁ puṇyaṁ maitryādivad agrhnati." Cf. V. V. Gokhale, "The Text of the Abhidharmakośakārikā of Vasubandhu," IV, v. 120a, *The Journal of the Bombay Branch, Royal Asiatic Society*, N.S. vol. 22, (1946), p. 89; 阿毘達摩俱舍論 18, T. 29, no. 1558, p. 97a; 阿毘達摩俱舍釋論 13, T. 29, no. 1559, p. 251b.
170 According to the *Samayabhedoparacanacakra*, the Mahīśāsaka taught that there is no great merit in offerings made to the Buddha stūpa. The schools of the Mahāsāṁghika lineage, such as the Caitika, Aparaśaila, and Uttaraśaila, also taught that the offerings to stūpa were of little value. Cf. 異部宗輪論, T. 49, no. 2031, pp. 16a, 17a; 十八部論, T. 49, no. 2032, pp. 18c, 19b; 部執異論, T. 49, no. 2033, pp. 21a, 22b; André Bareau, *Les sects Bouddhigues du petit véhicule* (Saigon, 1955), p. 270. In the Sarvāstivādin *Mahāvibhāṣāśāstra* it teaches that there is greater merit in offerings made to the Saṁgha than to the Buddha. Cf. 大毘婆沙論 130, T. 27, no. 1545, p. 678b.
171 妙法蓮華經, T. 9, no. 262, p. 3b, lines 21, 23, 26, (SKT, Kern and Nanjio, *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-sūtra*, p. 14, verse 44); p. 9a, lines 10, 24 (SKT, p. 51, verse 89; p. 52, verse 95); p. 19a, line 1; p. 21b, lines 19, 22 (SKT, p. 150, line 10; p. 151, line 2); p. 21c, line 17 (SKT, p. 153, line 3); p. 22a, line 6 (SKT, p. 154, verse 33); p. 32c, line 12 (SKT, p. 241, line 8), p. 46a, line 29 (SKT, p. 343, verse 54 caitya).
172 正法華經, T. 9, no. 263, p. 87c, line 4, and p. 88a, lines 4, 6, 26, etc.
173 妙法蓮華經 1, T. 9, no. 262, p. 8c, line 23 廟 (SKT, p. 50, verse 82), and p. 8c, line 21 石廟 (SKT, p. 50, verse 80).

174 妙法蓮華經 4, 15, T. 9, no. 262, p. 36c, line 23; p. 45b, line 26; p. 45c, line 13.
175 妙法蓮華經 5, T. 9, no. 262, p. 45b, line 26. (SKT, p. 338, line 5); 正法華經 8, T. 9, no. 263, p. 117a, line 11; Tibetan, vol. 30, p. 60, 2, 2–3.
176 妙法蓮華經 4, T. 9, no. 262, p. 36c, line 23; (SKT, p. 274, verse 17). Tibetan, vol. 30, p. 49–3–7.
177 妙法蓮華經, T. 9, no. 262, p. 45b, line 26; p. 45c, line 6; p. 46c, line 1; p. 47b, line 23, etc. (SKT, p. 338, line 6; p. 339, line 1; p. 352, verse 14); 正法華經, T. 9, no. 263, p. 117a, lines 11 and 23; p. 118a, line 9; p. 119, line 6.
178 正法華經, T. 9, no. 263, p. 71a, lines 24, 28; p. 102b, line 25; p. 102c, lines 10, 11, 13, 22; p. 104a, line 26; p. 117a, line 15; p. 126a, line 6; p. 128a lines 2, 3, etc. (SKT, p. 48, verses 78, 79; p. 240, lines 2, 5, 11; p. 241, lines 6, 7; p. 250, line 4; p. 338, line 8; p. 412, line 9; p. 430, line 2.)
179 正法華經, T. 9, no. 263, p. 103c, line 28; p. 104a, line 11, etc. (SKT, p. 248, line 14; p. 250, line 2)
180 Fukui Kojun 福井康順, "佛寺の字義", in「東洋思想史研究」(Tokyo, 1960), p. 194.
181 四分律 54, T. 22, no. 1428, p. 968c, line 21. 得寺內 (āvāsakappa, *Vinaya-piṭaka*, vol. 2, p. 294).
182 十誦律 41, T. 23, no. 1435, 不聽入寺, 比丘尼入寺, p. 296b, lines 26, 28.
183 摩訶僧祇律 14, 18, T. 22, no. 1425, p. 343b, line 16; p. 376a, line 22; p. 376b, line 21.
184 S. Konow, *Kharoṣṭhī Inscriptions* (Calcutta, 1929), pp. 55–57, XIX Mount Banj Inscription of the year 102 (A.D. 18–19, cf., p. xci.)
185 四分律 52, T. 22, no. 1428, p. 956c; 五分律 26, T. 22, no. 1421, p. 173a; 摩訶僧祇律 33, T. 22, no. 1425, p. 497c–499a; 根本說一切有部毘奈耶雜事 18, T. 24, no. 1451, p. 291c. *Divyāvadāna*, p. 350.
186 *The Smaller Sukhāvatīvyūha* 3; 阿彌陀經, T. 12, no. 366, p. 346c; 稱讚淨土佛攝受經, T. 12, no. 367, p. 348.
187 Identical to footnote 185.
188 Identical to footnote 186.
189 五分律, T. 22, no. 1421, p. 173a, line 11.
190 摩訶僧祇律 33, T. 22, no. 1425, p. 498b, lines 1–3.
191 *The Smaller Sukhāvatīvyūha* 4; The Chinese translation is identical to footnote 186.
192 摩訶僧祇律 33, T. 22, no. 1425, p. 498b, line 10f.
193 *The Smaller Sukhāvatīvyūha* 5; 阿彌陀經, T. 12, nn. 366, p. 347a, line 7f; 稱讚淨土佛攝受經, T. 12, no. 367, p. 349a, line 11f.
194 四分律 52, T. 22, no. 1428, p. 957a, line 6f; 五分律 26, T. 22, no. 1421, p. 173a, line 14ff; 摩訶僧祇律 33, T. 22, no. 1425, p. 498c, line 3f; 十誦律 56, T. 23, no. 1435, p. 415c, line 12f; 丁根本說一切有部毘奈耶雜事 18, T. 24, no. 1451, p. 292a, line 1f.
195 Prof. Nakamura Hajime has also discussed the similarities between the sukhāvatī and the stūpa, but he denied the connection between the two, because of the lack of stūpa in the *Sukhāvatīvyūha-sūtra* and the *Smaller Sukhāvatīvyūha-sūtra*. And for the reason that the bodhi tree is discussed in the *Sukhāvatīvyūha* he inferred that the transmitters of this sūtra were either worshippers of the bodhi tree or of huge Buddha images. Nakumura, "極樂淨土の觀念のインド學的解明とチベット的變容" in *JIBS*, vol. 11, no. 2, p. 134.
196 摩訶僧祇律 33, T. 22, no. 1425, p. 498a, line 18f; 十誦律 56, T. 23, no. 1435, p. 415c, line 5f.
197 五分律 26, T. 22, no. 1421, p. 173a, line 9.
198 無量壽經, T. 12, no. 360, SKT. *Sukhāvatīvyūha*.
199 阿彌陀三耶三佛薩樓佛檀過度人道經, T. 12, no. 362, pp. 301a–302b; 無量清淨平等覺經, T. 12, no. 361, pp. 281a–c.
200 阿彌陀三耶三佛薩樓佛檀過度人道經, T. 12, no. 362, p. 301b, line 22f.
201 無量清淨平等覺經, T. 12, no. 361, also contains 24 vows, but a vow identical to this

cannot be found; 無量壽經, T. no. 360, has 48 vows; *Sukhāvatīvyūha* has 48 vows; 大寶積經無量壽如來會 17, T. no. 310, has 48 vows; 大乘無量壽莊嚴經, T. no. 363, has 36 vows. In all of these sūtras the section on the stūpa is eliminated.

202 阿彌陀三耶三佛薩樓佛檀過度人道經, T. 12, no. 362, p. 310a, line 15f.

203 無量清淨平等覺經 3, T. 12, no. 361, p. 292a, line 5f. The Taisho Tripiṭaka ascribes the translation of this sūtra to 支婁迦讖, based upon the 開元釋教錄 1, T. 55, no. 2154, p. 478c, line 4. This is incorrect.

204 法鏡經, T. 12, no. 322, p. 15bf.

205 郁伽羅越問菩隆行經, T. 12, no. 323, p. 23af.

206 大寶積經郁伽長者會 82, T. 11, no. 310, p. 472bf. The Taisho Tripiṭaka ascribes the translation of this sūtra to 康僧鎧 (entered China between 249–253), but this is incorrect. The translator was 曇摩蜜多; cf. Hirakawa, "初期大乘教團における塔寺の意味" in *Shukyo Kenkyn* no. 153, (1957), p. 26.

207 十住毘婆沙論, T. no. 1521. This is quoted in the following sections: 歸命相品, 歸命相品, 知過患品, 入寺品, and 解頭陀品.

208 法鏡經, T. 12, no. 322, p. 19a, lines 15, 16.

209 十住毘婆沙論 8, T. 26, no. 1521, p. 61c, lines 3–4.

210 *Ibid.*, 8, T. 26, no. 1521, p. 62c, lines 21–23.

211 郁伽羅越問菩薩行經, T. 12, no. 323, p. 27a, lines 5–6.

212 *Ibid.*, T. 12, no. 323, p. 27a, line 4.

213 大寶積經 82, T. 11, no. 310, p. 476a, lines 18–19.

214 Tibetan Tripiṭaka, vol. 23, p. 265–3–2.

215 法鏡經, T. 12, no. 322, p. 20a, lines 22–23.

216 十住毘婆沙論 16, T. 26, no. 1521, p. 112a, lines 5–10.

217 郁伽羅越問菩薩行經, T. 12, no. 323, p. 28a, lines 25–26.

218 大寶積經 82, T. 11, no. 310, p. 477c, lines 19–22.

219 菩薩本業經, T. 10, no. 281, p. 446bf.

220 諸菩薩求佛本業經, T. 10, no. 282, p. 451af.

221 大方廣佛華嚴經淨行品第七 6, T. 9, no. 278, p. 430af.

222 大方廣佛華嚴經淨行品第十一 14, T. 10, no. 279, p. 69bf.

223 Tibetan Tripiṭaka, vol. 25, p. 93f.

224 菩薩本業經, T. 10, no. 281, p. 447c, line 11.

225 諸菩薩求佛本業經, T. 10, no. 282, p. 451c, line 13.

226 大方廣佛華嚴經 6, T. 9, no. 278, p. 430c, line 18.

227 大方廣佛華嚴經 14, T. 10, no. 279, p. 70a, line 20.

228 Tibetan Tripiṭaka, vol. 25, p. 94–3–3, 5.

229 菩薩本業經, T. 10, no. 281, p. 449b, lines 7–15; 諸菩薩求佛本業經, T. 10, no. 282, p. 453c, lines 16–27; 大方廣佛華嚴經 6, T. 9, no. 278, p. 432b, line 26 ~ p. 432c, line 10; 大方廣佛華嚴經 14, T. 9, no. 279, p. 71c, line 29-p. 72a, line 12; Tibetan, vol. 25, p. 97–2–1.

230 Identical to footnote 185.

231 摩訶僧祇律 33, T. 22, no. 1425, p. 498a, line 12f.

232 薩婆多毘尼毘婆沙 3, T. 23, no. 1440, p. 521b, lines 10 and 12.

233 異部宗輪論, T. 49, no. 2032, p. 17a, lines 12, 23; 十八部論, T. 49 no. 2033, p. 19b, lines 24, and 19c, line 3; 部執異論 T. 49, no. 2034, p. 22b, lines 1, 13; Tibetan Tripiṭaka, no. 5639, vol. 127, pp. 252–4–3, 252–5–1.

234 摩訶僧祇律 3, T. 22, no. 1425, p. 251c, lines 22–27.

235 十誦律 48, T. 23, no. 1435, p. 352b, lines 21–25.

236 薩婆多毘尼毘婆沙 5, T. 23, no. 1440, p. 534b, line 29-p. 534c, line 3.

237 根本說一切有部毘奈耶雜事 18, T. 24, no. 1451, p. 292a, lines 7, 8.

238 五分律 26, T. 22, no. 1421, p. 176a, lines 9–11.

239 四分律 52, T. 22, no. 1426, p. 957a, line 3; p. 957c, lines 17, 18.

240 異部宗輪論, T. 49, no. 2032, p. 17a, line 24; 十八部論, T. 49, no. 2033, p. 19c, lines 3, 4; 部執異論, T. 49, no. 2034, p. 22b, lines 14, 15. Tibetan, no. 5639, vol. 127, p. 252–3–1.
241 四分僧戒本, T. 22, no. 1430, p. 1029b, line 4–1029c, line 1; and no. 1429, p. 1021b, line 27–1021c, line 29.
242 四分律 52, T. 22, no. 1428, p. 957a, line 6; 五分律 26, T. 22, no. 1421, p. 173a, line 14; 摩訶僧祇律 33, T. 22, no. 1425, p. 498c, line 3f; 根本說一切有部毘奈耶雜事 18, T. 24, no. 1451, p. 292a, line 2.
243 For example, *Vinayapiṭaka*, vol. 1, pp. 83, 84.
244 S. Konow, *Kharoṣṭhī Inscriptions with the Exception of those of Aśoka* (Calcutta, 1929).
245 S. Konow, *ibid.*, p. 2, line 1f, pp. xci, xciv.
246 *DN., Mahāparinibbāna-suttanta*, vol. II, p. 141; Rhys Davids, *Dialogues of the Buddha*, Part II, (London, 1910), p. 154.
247 *DN., ibid.*, p. 159f; Rhys Davids, *ibid.*, p. 179f.
248 *DN., ibid.*, pp. 166, 167; Rhys Davids, *ibid.*, pp. 190, 191.
249 長阿含經 (遊行經,) T. 1, no. 1, p. 20a, line 22f; p. 20b, lines 13f; p. 27c, lines 17f; p. 30a, lines 13f. 長阿含經 adds 瓶塔, 炭塔, 髮塔 and enumerates a total of 11 stūpas; 佛般泥洹經, T. 1, no. 5, p. 169a, lines 29f; p. 173a, line 5f; p. 175c, lines 15, 瓶塔, 炭塔, 灰塔 are added to the 8 stūpas to make a total of 11 stūpas; 般泥洹經, T. 1, no. 6, p. 186c, lines 16f; p. 189a, lines 9f; p. 190c, lines 3f. The same as above, 11 stūpas; 大般涅槃經, T. 1, no. 7, p. 199c, lines 21f; p. 206a, lines 7f; p. 207c, lines 4f. 瓶塔, and 灰炭塔, are added to the 8 stūpas to make 10 stūpas, matching the number in the Pali. E. Waldschmidt, *Das Mahāparinirvāṇsūtra*, Teil III, ss. 358, 406f, 446f. Kumbhastūpa and Aṅgārastūpa are discussed besides the 8 stūpas; 根本說一切有部毘奈耶雜事 37–39, T. 24, no. 1451, p. 394c, lines 19f; p. 400b, lines 10f; p. 402b, lines 24. Ten stūpas are mentioned, identical with the Sanskrit text.
250 E. Hultzsch, *Inscriptions of Aśoka* (Oxford, 1925), p. 165.
251 大唐西域記 6, T. 51, no. 2087, p. 901b, lines 17–22.
252 *Ibid.*, 6, T. 51, p. 901b, lines 11–16.
253 阿育王傳 1, T. 50, no. 2042, p. 102a, lines 8f; 阿育王經 1, T. 50, no. 2043, p. 135a, lines 3f; 雜阿含經 23, T. 2, no. 99, p. 165a, lines 13f.
254 Bühler, *Epigraphia Indica*, vol. II, pp. 91–92. Cunninghanm and Bühler collected and published the inscriptions at Sāñchī of the Maurya dynasty, and among the donors there are many bhikṣus and bhikṣuṇīs included. Prof. Nakamura examined their number and analyzed its significance. Nakamura, "マウリヤ王朝時代における佛教の社會的基盤", 宮本正尊教授還曆記念論文集, (Tokyo, 1954), p. 200.
255 五分律 26, T. 22, no. 1421, p. 172a, lines 3f; 摩訶僧祇律 33, T. 22, no. 1425, p. 497b, lines 18f.
256 大唐西域記 6, T. 51, no. 2087, p. 900c, lines 16, 21.
257 四分律 52, T. 22, no. 1428, p. 958a, lines 25f; p. 956c, lines 1f.
258 根本說一切有部毘奈耶雜事 18, T. 24, no. 1451, p. 291a, line 17f.
259 十誦律 56, T. 23, no. 1435, p. 415b, line 27f; 四分律 52, T. 22, no. 1428, p. 957b, line 10f; 摩訶僧祇律 29, T. 22, no. 1425, p. 461b, line 29f.

* There is a difference between the *MPP-śāstra* and the *Daśabhūmika-vibhāṣā* which should be noted. I have pointed them out and advocated their importance in determining the author of the respective works. Cf. footnote 100. Prof. Hikata states that the *MPP-śāstra* is composed of three parts: the part that existed in the original text by Nāgārjuna, the part added by the translator Kumārajīva, and the part that Kumārajīva extracted from other works and interpolated in the translation. Cf. Hikata, 大智度論の作者について JIBS VII, 1, pp. If. Cf. also footnote 99.

# 41

# MAÑJUŚRĪ

*Étienne Lamotte*

Source: *T'oung Pao*, 48 (1960): 1–96.

Mañjuśrī est, avec les buddha Amitābha, Akṣobhya, Bhaiṣajyaguru, et les bodhisattva Maitreya, Avalokiteśvara et Samantabhadra, l'une des toutes grandes figures du bouddhisme mahâyânique et tantrique.

Son nom signifie „Douce majesté", mais il s'agit d'une majesté toute spirituelle qui en fait le dépositaire et le dispensateur de la science sacrée du Grand Véhicule. Ses autres noms, et ils sont T'oung Pao XLVIII nombreux, insistent sur la qualité de son éloquence: *Mañjughoṣa* „A la parole douce", *Mañjusvara* „Aux sons harmonieux", *Vādirāja* ou *Vāgīśvara* „Seigneur de la parole".

Ses représentations figurées sont actuellement répandues dans le monde bouddhique tout entier, en Inde, au Tibet, en Chine et au Japon[1]. Il apparaît sous la forme d'un bodhisattva religieux, coiffé du *pañcacīraka*, composé de cinq mèches de cheveux ou d'une tiare à cinq pointes, ce qui lui vaut le titre de *Pañcacīra*. Il tient dans la main droite le glaive (*khaḍga*) qui tranche toute ignorance, et dans la main gauche le livre (*pustaka*) qui recèle toute connaissance. Il a le lion (*siṃha*) pour siège et pour monture. L'épithète que les textes bouddhiques lui attribuent le plus souvent est celle de *Kumārabhūta* „Jeune homme" ou „Prince royal".

Comme Mademoiselle M. Lalou l'a fait remarquer, Mañjuśrī présente des affinités assez étroites avec Pañcaśikha, le roi des Gandharva, bien connu des anciennes écritures canoniques du bouddhisme. En sa qualité de Gandharva, Pañcaśikha fut un musicien qui charma le Buddha par la douceur de ses chants et son talent de harpiste[2]. On l'appelait Pañcaśikha parce qu'il portait cinq boucles ou cinq tresses à la façon des jeunes garçons[3]. Un sūtra le présente comme une émanation de Brahmā Sanatkumāra, une forme de Brahmā „éternellement jeune"[4]. De telles analogies, en conclut Mlle Lalou, ne sont pas fortuites: „La popularité du Gandharva Pañcaśikha et le culte du Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī paraissent dériver d'une même source mythique: la croyance à un dieu éternellement jeune. Timidement représenté dans le bouddhisme du Petit Véhicule par Pañcaśikha, qui ne jouę jamais qu'un rôle épisodique, ce mythe a pris une importance considérable dans certaines sectes du Grand Véhicule. Mañjuśrī, comme le prouvent ses épithètes et ses attributs, paraît bien être

l'équivalent mahâyâniste du Kārttikeya brâhmanique et du Pañcaśikha hînayâniste"[5].

Ajoutons que le culte de Pañcaśikha jouit d'une grande popularité dans le Nord-Ouest de l'Inde[6] et que la *Mahāmāyūrī*[7] lui attribue comme résidence les confins du Cachemire (*Kāśmīrasaṃdhi*), tandis qu'elle situe son fils aîné (*jyeṣṭhaputra*) dans les territoires du Cīna (*Cīnabhūmi*), manifestement la Cīnabhukti, district himālayen localisé par Hiuan-tsang à proximité de l'actuel Fīrōzpur[8].

## I. L'antiquité du culte de Mañjuśrī

Le seul examen des monuments figurés entraînerait à conclure que le culte de Mañjuśrī était peu pratiqué durant les premiers siècles de l'ère chrétienne, alors que le Mahāyāna était en pleine formation.

L'école du Gandhāra ne traduit encore que les conceptions hînayânistes concernant le panthéon bouddhique[9]. Elle fournit de très nombreux Bodhisattva en costume princier, mais représentant Śākyamuni presque exclusivement. Vajrapāṇi y fait encore figure de yakṣa, protecteur du Buddha. Il y a bien quelques représentations de Maitreya, mais les hînayânistes déjà le tenaient comme le successeur immédiat de Śākyamuni et le Buddha du futur.

La même constation a été faite à Mathurā[10] et vaudrait également pour Amarāvatī et Nāgārjunakoṇḍa. On n'y a trouvé aucune trace des grands sauveurs du Mahāyāna, Avalokiteśvara et Mañjuśrī; ils ne figurent pas au répertoire de ces écoles, tel du moins qu'il nous est connu.

En Asie Centrale, c'est tardivement qu'à côté du Buddha apparaissent des formes d'Avalokiteśvara, puis Mañjuśrī et Samantabhadra. Ils sont absents des anciens styles relevant directement de l'école gandhârienne ou d'une forme encore plus évoluée[11]. En Chine, les inscriptions des grottes de Long-men et du Che-k'ou sseu près de Lo-yang, du Tsien-po chan à Tsi-nan-fou, mentionnent fréquemment les noms d'Amitābha et d'Avalokiteśvara, mais ignorent pratiquement Mañjuśrī[12]. Pourtant celui-ci est représenté, avec Vimalakīrti, sur quelques stèles chinoises du VIe siècle[13]. Vimalakīrti couché sur son lit de malade, un éventail à la main, incarne à merveille le type du lettré chinois, tandis que Mañjuśrī revendique son rang en tenant en main un bâton recourbé, communément appelé *jou-yi* 如意 „gratte-dos", en réalité un *t'an-ping* 談柄 „bâton de conversation" symbolisant l'éloquence diserte[14].

Si l'art bouddhique des premiers siècles de l'ère n'accorde à Mañjuśrī qu'une place des plus modestes, les Vaipulyasūtra lui furent au contraire largement ouverts, et cela dès les origines mêmes du Mahāyāna. Mais il faut se garder de toute généralisation hâtive: Mañjuśrī n'influence qu'une partie de la littérature mabâyâniste. Les Vaipulyasūtra développent des idées philosophiques, sinon identiques, au moins très voisines, mais chacun se réclame d'une dévotion particulière envers tel ou tel grand Bodhisattva. L'histoire des tendances piétistes au sein de cette énorme littérature est encore à faire, mais il est patent que certains

sūtra se réclament de Maitreya (tels les *Maitreyavyākaraṇa*[15], d'autres d'Amitābha (tels les *Sukhāvatīvyūha*), d'autres d'Avalokiteśvara (comme le *Kāraṇḍavyūha*), et ainsi de suite.

Or les sūtra qui s'inspirent de Mañjuśrī et l'introduisent dans leurs dialogues sont fort nombreux; ils apparaissent dès les origines du Mahāyāna et se rangent parmi les premiers textes à avoir été traduits en chinois, au début du grand mouvement missionnaire qui devait conquérir la Chine au bouddhisme.

M. Lalou est déjà arrivée à cette conclusion, rien qu'en examinant les titres des sūtra mentionnant expressément Mañjuśrī[16]. L'étude du contenu même des textes ne fait que renforcer cette constatation. Voici, sans prétendre être complet, une liste de sūtra d'inspiration mañjuśréenne qui furent traduits en chinois durant la seconde moitié du IIe et le IIIe siècle de notre ère:

1. Traductions de Tche Leou-kia-tch'an (Tche Tch'an) ou Lokakṣema (?) des Yue-tche. Il travailla à Lo-yang dans la seconde moitié du IIe siècle:

T 807 *Nei tsang po pao king* = **Lokānuvartanasūtra*.

T 626 *A tchö che wang king* = *Ājataśatrukaukṛtyavinodana*. – Autres versions chinoises T 627, 628, 629; version tib. Otani Kanjur Catalogue 882.

T 458 *Wen chou che li wen p'ou sa chou king*.

Selon des renseignements datant du IVe siècle[17], Tche Tch'an aurait encore exécuté la première traduction du *Śūraṃgamasamādhisūtra* où Mañjuśrī tient une place importante. Cette traduction est perdue depuis longtemps. Des dix traductions du *Śūraṃgamasamādhisūtra* où Mañjuśrī tient une place importante. Cette traduction est perdue depuis longtemps. Des dix traductions du *Śūraṃgamasamādhi* exécutées en Chine du IIe au VIe siècle, il ne nous reste que celle de Kumārajīva (T 642). Nous disposons encore d'une version tibétaine (OKC 800), de quelques passages originaux reproduits dans le *Śikṣāsamuccaya* (p. 8.19; 91.8) et d'un court fragment publié dans A. F. R. Hoernle, *Manuscript Remains*, Oxford, 1915, p. 125–131.

2. Traductions de Tche K'ien (K'ien „des Yue-tche", mais originaire de Loyang) qui travailla dans l'Empire de Wou, à Nankin principalement, de 222 à 253:

T 474 *Wei mo kie king* = *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa*. C'est la plus ancienne tr. qui nous soit parvenue. Autres versions chin. dans T 475 et 476; version tib. OKC 843.

T 632 *Houei yin san mei king* = *Tathāgatajñānamudrāsamādhi*. Voir encore T 633 et 634; OKC 799.

3. Traductions de Tchou Fa-hou, Dharmarakṣa „de l'Inde", mais originaire de Touen-houang. Il voyagea dans les pays d'Occident, puis il revint à Touen-houang; il résida principalement à Tch'ang-ngan et à Lo-yang et circula ailleurs en Chine. Il travailla de 265 à 308 ou 313 et mourut à 78 ans:

T 263 *Tcheng fa houa king* = *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra*, version exécutée, en 286, sur un texte „augmenté" du Lotus. Voir encore T 262, 264; OKC 781; sans parler de la recension sanskrite qui nous est parvenue.

T 318 *Wen chou che li fo t'ou yen tsing king* = *Mañjuśrībuddha-kṣetraguṇavyūha*. Voir encore T 310 (n° 15), 319; OKC 760 (n° 15).

T 461 *Wen chou che li hien pao tsang king = Ratnakāraṇḍavyūha*. Comparer T 462; OKC 785.

T 477 *Ta fang teng ting wang king = *Mahāvaipulyamūrdhābhi-ṣiktarāja*. Comparer T 478 et 479.

T 588 *Siu tchen t'ien tseu king = *Suvikrāntacintādevaputra- paripṛcchā*. Comparer OKC 828.

T 589 *Ma nie king = *Mañjuśrīvikurvaṇaparivarta*. Comparer OKC 828.

T 636 *Wou ki pao san mei king = *Anargharatnasamādhi*. Comparer T 637.

T 810 *Tchou fo yao tsi king = Buddhasaṃgītisūtra*. Un manuscrit de ce texte, daté de 296, été découvert à Touen-houang et est actuellement conservé au Japon. Il existe aussi une version tibétaine: OKC 894.

T 629 *Fong po king = Ajātaśatrukaukṛtyavinodana*, traduit par un anonyme contemporain de Dharmarakṣa, entre les années 265 et 316. Comparer T 626, 627, 628; OKC 882.

4. Traduction de Nie Tao-tchen, qui vécut sous les Tsin Occidentaux, aux environs de l'an 300. Il collabora avec son père, Nie Tch'eng-yuan, aux traductions de Dharmarakṣa jusqu'à la mort de ce dernier, puis il avait lui-même rédigé d'autres traductions:

T 463 *Wen chou che li pan nie p'an king = *Mañjuśrīparinirvāṇa*. A ma connaissance, nous ne possédons pas d'autres recensions de cet intéressant Sūtra, mentionné dans le *Li tai san pao ki* T 2034, k. 6, p. 65 *c* 7, et le *Ta T'ang nei tien lou* T 2149, k. 2, p. 236 *c* 8.

De cette liste, forcément incomplète, se détachent deux conclusions: aux origines mêmes du Mahāyāna, Mañjuśrī intervient dans les Vaipulyasūtra et il fut connu des Chinois dès la dynastie des Han postérieurs. D'autres Sūtra et Śāstra, d'une inspiration identique, seront d'ailleurs traduits sans interruption jusqu'à la fin du XIIe siècle.

On notera cependant que la *Prajñāpāramitā*, source principale de Nāgārjuna et de l'école Mādhyamika, ne fit pas partie du mouvement. Sauf dans la traduction de Tche Tch'an[18], Mañjuśrī n'apparaît pas dans l'*Aṣṭasāhasrikā* considérée par M. Conze comme la tranche primitive de cette littérature[19]. La *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā* et la *Śatasāhasrikā* ne le mentionnent qu'en passant[20]. C'est seulement à partir de la *Saptaśatikā* que les Prajñā compteront une section dite de Mañjuśrī. Mais les traductions chinoises de cette section ne remontent pas plus haut que le VIe siècle[21].

## II. Mañjuśrī, bodhisattva de la dixième terre

A la fin du IVe siècle avant notre ère, Évhémère de Messine publia une *Inscription sacrée* qu'il prétendait avoir lue sur un autel de la ville de Panara, capitale de la Panchaïe, dans l'Océan Indien. Cette inscription rapportait qu'Ouranos, Kronos et Zeus avaient été des rois de la Panchaïe, divinisés après leur mort. L'auteur partait de là pour édifier sa théorie selon laquelle les dieux de l'Antiquité avaient été des êtres humains mais divinisés après leur mort par la crainte ou

l'admiration des peuples. En histoire des religions l'évhémérisme n'est pas mort, car il répond à une tendance profonde de l'esprit humain de chercher la réalité à travers le mythe. Les Buddha et les Bodhisattva eux-mêmes n'y ont point échappé. Ainsi, ces trente dernières années ont vu se multiplier des tentatives sans cesse renaissanres pour faire du bodhisattva Maitreya un personnage historique et, malgré ses inconcevables pouvoirs miraculeux, Mañjuśrī lui-même a risqué le même sort[22].

M. Demiéville s'est souvent élevé contre cette conception qui manifeste „une surprenante méconnaissance des données les plus élémentaires de la psychologie religieuse et littéraire, aussi bien que de la notion d'historicité"[23]. Appliqué à des Bodhisattva, l'évhémérisme n'est pas qu'un préjugé gratuit; c'est encore, du point de vue bouddhique s'entend, une erreur doctrinale. Car, pour les plus dévots de leurs sectateurs, les Bodhisattva sont des êtres de raison et n'existent absolument pas. La théorie de base du Mahāyāna est la non-naissance (*anutpāda*) et la non-destruction (*anirodha*) des êtres et des choses. Ceux-ci sont „calmes dès l'origine" (*ādiśānta*) et „essentiellement nirvânés" (*prakṛtiparinirvṛta*). Comment donc parler d'essence ou de devenir? Rien ni personne n'échappe à cette absence de nature propre (*niḥsvabhāvatā*) et, à cet égard, les saints, les Bodhisattva, les Buddha ne constituent pas une exception.

C'est par dizaines de milliers que l'on pourrait relever dans les textes des affirmations comme celles-ci: „Je ne découvre aucune chose qui soit Bodhisattva; je ne découvre aucune chose qui soit Perfection de sagesse. Ne trouvant, ne percevant, ne découvrant aucune chose qui soit Bodhisattva ou qualité de Bodhisattva, aucune chose qui soit Perfection de sagesse, quel Bodhisattva pourrais-je initier à quelle perfection de sagesse?"[24]. — „Il serait regrettable que ne trouvant, ne percevant, ne découvrant aucune réalité, je fasse, ne fût-ce qu'en paroles seulement, apparaître ou disparaître un Bodhisattva"[25]. — „Le Boddhisattva est non-production; les qualités de Bodhisattva sont non-production"[26]. — „Ce qu'on appelle Bodhisattva et Perfection de sagesse n'est qu'un nom, et ce nom de Bodhisattva n'est perçu ni intérieurement ni extérieurement ni entre deux. Cependant on parle d'êtres divers, mais aucun être n'existe. Tous ces noms sont seulement des désignations et n'existent que comme désignations"[27].

Ce n'est donc pas dans le monde ni dans l'histoire du monde qu'il faut chercher les Bodhisattva, mais dans sa propre pensée. Encore ne l'y trouvera-t-on qu'en n'en parlant point et en n'y pensant point car „la pensée est non-pensée, et la nature de la pensée est lumineuse"[28].

Il y a, dit l'*Avataṃsaka*, dix lieux de naissance (*janmasthāna*) pour les Bodhisattva: 1. La pensée de l'illumination (*bodhicitta*), 2. la haute résolution (*adhyāśaya*), 3. les terres (*bhūmi*), 4. les grands vœux (*mahāpraṇidhāna*), 5. la grande compassion (*mahākaruṇā*), 6. la réflexion correcte (*yoniśomanasikāra*), 7. le Grand Véhicule (*mahāyāna*), 8. la maturation des êtres (*sattvaparipācana*), 9. le savoir (*jñāna*) et les

moyens salvifiques (*upāya*), 10. la culture de tous les bons dharma (*sarvadharmabhāvanā*).[29]

Comme ses illustres confrères, Avalokiteśvara, Maitreya, etc., Mañjuśrī est un Bodhisattva de la dixième terre, arrivé en fin de carrière.

Toute spirituelle, la carrière d'un Bodhisattva comporte quatre stages[30]:

1. Le stage préliminaire appelé *prakṛticaryā*, la période durant laquelle les qualités innées se manifestent et qui commence lorsque le futur Bodhisattva plante les racines de bien (*kuśalamūla*) qu'il appliquera plus tard à la conqueête de l'illumination.

2. Le second stage est celui du Bodhisattva qui conçoit pour la première fois la pensée de l'illumination (*prathamacittotpādika*), pensée qui présente le double caractère d'être associée au désir de la suprême et parfaite illumination (*saṃbodhikāmanāsahāgata*) et d'avoir pour object le bien d'autrui (*parārthālambana*)[31]. Durant ce stage, le Bodhisattva fortifie son adhésion (*adhimukti*) à la doctrine bouddhique du Grand Véhicule et formule les grands vœux (*mahāpraṇidhāna*). Cepedant il n'est encore qu'un débutant (*ādikarmika*) qui s'engage dans le chemin du Véhicule (*prathamayānasaṃprasthita*) et a le désir de le parcourir (*gantukāma*), mais qui n'est pas encore parti.

3. Durant le troisième stage, le Bodhisattva exerce la carrière des Bodhisattva (*bodhisattvacaryāñ caran*) et les pratiques conformes à ses vœux (*anulomacaryā*). Il est un „voyageur" (*gantṛ*), „doué des pratiques" (*caryāpratipanna*). Ce stage embrasse les sept premières „terres" (*bhūmi*), ou stages spirituels, appelées: 1. joyeuse (*pramuditā*), 2. sans tache (*vimalā*), 3. éclatante (*prabhākarī*), 4. de sagesse innée (*arciṣmatī*), 5. très difficile à conquérir (*sudurjayā*), 6. de la présence (*abhimukhī*), 7. terre qui va loin (*dūraṃgamā*).

4. Le quatrième stage est celui de la pratique sans recul (*avinivartanacaryā*). Il embrasse les terres huit à dix: 8. terre non-agitée (*acalā*), 9. terre de la bonne sagesse (*sādhumatī*), 10. terre du nuage de la loi (*dharmameghā*).

La huitième terre, terre non-agitée (*acalā*), encore appelée terre sans recul (*avaivartikā*), est caractérisée par une conviction inébranlable relativement à la doctrine mahâyânique selon laquelle les choses ne naissent pas (*anutpattikadharmakṣānti*). La pensée du Bodhisattva ne conçoit plus d'objet (*nimitta*), et c'est sans effort (*ābhoga*) qu'il poursuivra désormais son activité altruiste.

C'est alors que le Buddha lui donne la grande „prédiction" (*vyākaraṇa*)[32] en vertu de laquelle le Bodhisattva est „assuré" (*niyata*) d'arriver à la suprême et parfaite illumination.

Le Bodhisattva sans recul (*avaivartika*) abandonne le corps de chair (*māṃsakāya*), né en raison des actes et soumis aux naissances et aux morts, et revêt un corps né de l'élément de la loi (*dharmadhātujakāya*), corps essentiel muni des diverses „perfections de qualités" (*guṇasaṃpad*)[33].

La dixième terre est nommée Nuage de la Loi (*dharmamegha*) parce qu'elle possède un savoir éminent qui renferme toutes les concentrations (*samādhi*) comme le nuage contient l'eau pure; parce qu'elle écarte les passions (*kleśa*) et

l'obstacle au savoir (*jñeyāvaraṇa*) comme le nuage cache l'espace; enfin, parce qu'elle émet d'innombrables qualités (*aprameyaguṇa*) comme le nuage qui fait pleuvoir une eau claire et limpide[34].

> Les Bodhisattva qui résident dans la dixième terre sout munis des dharma de Buddha; cependant ils restent dans le monde pour sauver les êtres; ils n'entrent donc pas dans le Nirvāṇa. Ainsi, comme des magiciens, ils créent des corps de métamorphose (*nirmāṇa*) et enseignent la Loi aux hommes. Mais ils n'ont pas réellement un corps de Buddha. Ils délivrent les êtres, mais avec mesure, limite; tandis que les êtres délivrés par le Buddha sont sans messure sans limite. Ils se font un corps de Buddha, mais ils ne remplissent pas les dix régions. Le corps du Bodhisattva est pareil à la lune du quatorzième jour; celui des Buddha à la lune du quinzième[35].

La différence est si minime que la *Prajñāpāramitā* affirme: „Le Bodhisattva, le grand être, qui se trouve dans la dixième terre doit être appelé purement et simplement un Tathāgata"[36].

Le Bodhisattva de la dixième terre porte les titres *d'ekajātipratibaddha* et de *kumārabhūta* qui exigent un bref commentaire.

*Ekajātipratibaddha*, en tibétain *skye-ba gcig-gis thogs-pa*, en chinois *yi-cheng-pou-tch'ou* 一生補處 ou *yi-cheng-so-hi* 一生所繫, signifie „lié à une seule renaissance [avant d'accéder à la suprême et parfaite illumination]". Résidant dans le ciel des Tuṣita, le Bodhisattva manifestera ici-bas une dernière naissance au cours de laquelle il obtiendra la suprême illumination. C'est ce qu'explique clairement la *Prajñāpāramitā*:

> Il y a des Bodhisattva liés a une seule renaissance qui, exerçant la Perfection de sagesse, entrent par habileté salvifique dans les quatre extases et autres concentrations jusque et y compris celles [de la vacuité, du sans-caractère] et de la non-prise en considération; mais ils n'en subissent pas l'emprise. Ayant réjoui les bieuheureux Buddha qui se présentaient à eux et pratiqué la continence sous leurs ordres, ils vont renaître en la compagnie des dieux Tuṣita et y demeurent durant une existence. Y étant restés durant une existence, les facultés intactes, doués de souvenir et de sagesse, entourés et précédés par des centaines de milliers de millions de dieux, ils manifestent une naissance ici-bas; puis, dans divers champs de Buddha, ils arrivent à la suprême et parfaite illumination[37].

L'épithète de *kumārabhūta*, en tibétain *gźon-nur gyur-pa*, est presque synonyme: dans la dixième terre, le Bodhisattva reçoit l'onction (*abhiṣeka*) qui le consacre prince héritier (*kumāra*) du Roi de la Loi et l'associe au pouvoir royal auquel il est appelé à accéder[38].

Enfin, c'est dans la dixième terre que le Bodhisattva entre en possession du Śūraṃgamasamādhi „concentration de la Marche héroïque" qu'il ne partage qu'avec les Buddha. Par cette concentration „il domine le champ de toutes les concentrations"[39]. „Par la force de cette concentration, il manifeste au choix, dans les dix régions, naissance (*jāti*), sortie du monde (*abhiniṣkramaṇa*), Nirvāṇa, Parinirvāṇa ou partage de ses reliques (*śarīrānupradāna*): tout cela pour le bien des êtres"[40].

Le champ d'action du grand Bodhisattva est sinon infini, comme celui des Buddha, au moins pratiquement illimité. Pour l'intelligence de ce qui va suivre, il faut apporter ici quelques précisions:

1. Les anciennes écritures du bouddhisme limitent généralement leur perspective au monde de la transmigration, au triple monde (*traidhātuka*) et à son réceptacle (*bhājana*) constitué par l'univers à quatre continents (*caturdvīpakalokadhātu*), encerclé d'une montagne de fer, le Cakravāḍa[41].

Le Bodhisattva peut se manifester non seulement en tel ou, tel endroit du continent indien, le Jambudvīpa, mais aussi dans n'importe quelle direction de l'univers à quatre continents. Surface plane, cet univers ne comporte que deux dimensions, longueur et largeur. On peut y distinguer quatre régions principales (*diś*) correspondant aux quatre points du compas et quatre régions intermédiaires (*vidiś*) s'intercalant entre les points du compas.

a. Les quatre régions principales (*diś*, *phyogs*, *jang* 方):
Est (*purvā*, *śar*, *tong* 東).
Sud (*dakṣiṇā*, *lho*, *nan* 南).
Ouest (*paścimā*, *nub*, *si* 西).
Nord (*uttarā*, *byaṅ*, *pei* 北).

b. Les quatre régions intermédiaires (*vidiś*, *phyogs-ḥtsham*, *wei* 維 ou *yu* 隅):
Nord-Est (*uttarapūrvā*, *byaṅ-śar*, *tong-pei* 東北).
Sud-Est (*pūrvadakṣiṇā*, *śar-lho*, *tong-nan* 東南).
Sud-Ouest (*dakṣiṇāpaścimā*, *lho-nub*, *si-nan* 西南).
Nord-Ouest (*paścimottarā*, *nub-byaṅ*, *si-pei* 西北).

2. En marge de ce monde restreint, les bouddhistes ont édifié un grandiose système cosmique qui apparaît déjà dans les textes du Petit Véhicule, mais gagna encore en importance dans ceux du Grand[42].

Ce système distingue trois sortes d'univers complexes: 1. Le petit chiliocosme (*sāhasracūḍiko lokadhātuḥ*) comprenant mille univers à quatre continents; 2. Le moyen chiliocosme (*dvisāhasro madhyamo lokadhātuḥ*) comprenant mille univers du type précédent, 3. Le grand chiliocosme ou trichiliomégachiliocosme (*trisāhasramahāsāhasro lokadhātuḥ*) comprenant mille univers du type précédent, soit un milliard d'univers à quatre continents.

Les grands chiliocosmes sont „égaux en nombre aux grains de sabie du Gange (*ganganadivālukopama*) multipliés jusqu'à l'infini. Ils sont répartis dans le

cosmos et, comme celui-ci est à trois dimensions, les univers occupent non seulement les quatre régions principales (*diś*) et les quatre régions intermédiaires (*vidiś*) signalées ci-dessus, mais encore deux régions supplémentaires (en pāli, *paṭidisā*):

Nadir (*adhas* ou *adhastāt, ḥog, hia*, 下).
Zénith (*ūrdhvam* ou *upariṣṭāt, steṅ, chang* 上)[43].

Certains de ces univers, mais pas tous, peuvent constituer un „champ de Buddha" (*buddhakṣetra*), là où „un Tathāgata, saint, pleinement et parfaitement illuminé se trouve, vit, existe et enseigne la Loi" (*yatra tathāgato 'rhan samyaksaṃbuddhas tiṣṭhati dhriyate yāpayati dharmaṃ ca deśayati*).

Ainsi le *trisāhasramahāsāhasralokadhātuḥ* dont fait partie notre univers à quatre continents est le champ du Buddha Śākyamuni. On l'appelle l'Univers *Sahā* (*Sahā lokadhātuḥ*) et il est situé dans la région du Sud.

Ajoutons que certains de ces grands chiliocosmes sont privés de la présence des Buddha[44] et que certains champs de Buddha se présentent comme des multiples de grands chiliocosmes[45].

Le Bodhisattva peut atteindre tous ces univers ávec la rapidité de la pensée et y faire œuvre de Buddha. C'est ce qui s'appelle „purifier les champs de Buddha". Mais, ce faisant, il n'est pas dupe de son jeu: „Il considère tous les champs de Buddha comme essentiellement vides (*svabhāvaśūnya*), calmes (*śānta*), irréels (*asiddha*) et semblables à l'espace (*ākāśasama*)"[46]. Le Bodhisattva purifie les champs de Buddha en purifiant sa propre pensée, — et par le fait même celle des autres —, de toutes les impuretés du corps, de la voix et de la pensée[47]. C'est le seul moyen de ne pas les construire dans le vide, puisqu'il n'y a personne pour les édifier et rien pour les aménager[48].

## III. Cittotpāda et Saṃbodhi de Mañjuśrī

Le Bodhisattva est, par définition, un „être" (*sattva*) d'„illumination" (*bodhi*), et sa carrière s'enferme entre deux moments cruciaux: 1. La production de la pensée de l'illumination (*bodhicittotpāda*) ou la résolution (*adhyāśaya*) de devenir un Buddha pleinement et parfaitement illuminé afin d'assurer le bien et le bonheur de tous les êtres; 2. L'arrivée à la suprême et parfaite illumination (*anuttarā samyaksaṃbodhi*) qui en fait un Buddha.

En conséquence, la tâche des Vaipulyasūtra consacrés aux grands Bodhisattva est de nous faire connaître quand, où et devant quel Buddha, le Bodhisattva produit son *bodhicitta* et fixe par ses souhaits (*praṇidhāna*), les qualités dont il entend orner son futur champ de Buddha (*buddhakṣetra*), où et quand le même Bodhisattva arrive à la suprême et parfaite illumination.

Le *Sukhāvatīvyūha* nous renseigne avec précision sur ces deux moments essentiels dans la „vie" du buddha Amitābha.

C'est autrefois, durant un Kalpa incalculable, plus qu'incalculable, immense, incommensurable et inconcevable, où s'étaient succédés 80 Buddha, qu'apparut

dans le monde, comme 81ᵉ, le buddha Lokeśvara. En présence de ce Buddha, le moine Dharmā-kara (le futur Amitābha) produisit la pensée de l'illumination et, ayant contemplé les perfections de 81 centaines de milliers de *nayutakoṭi* de champs de Buddha, conçut un champ de Buddha quatre-vingt-une fois plus parfait, et énuméra les qualités dont il entendait orner sa terre, si jamais il arrivait à l'état suprême de Buddha parfaitement accompli. Ces „vœux" (*praṇidhāna*), au nombre d'une cinquantaine, sont formulés d'une manière négative; toutes les perfections y sont indiquées par leurs contraires, comme ici, par exemple: „Si, dans le champ de Buddha qui m'est destiné, il doit y avoir entre les dieux et les hommes une distinction autre que celle du nom, puissé-je ne pas parvenir à l'état de Buddha."

Conformant sa conduite à ces promesses véridiques (*yathābhūta-pratijñāpratipattipratiṣṭhita*), Dharmākara exerça la carrière de bodhisattva (*bodhisattvacaryā*) durant 100.000 *nayutakoṭi* d'années. Après quoi, il obtint la suprême et parfaite illumination et devint un Buddha parfaitement accompli. Actuellement, sous le nom d'Amitābha, „il se trouve, vit, existe et prêche la Loi" dans l'univers Fortuné (*Sukhāvatī*), situé dans la région de l'Ouest et séparé de notre univers par cent mille *nayutakoṭi* de champs de Buddha.

Comme bien on pense, nous ne sommes pas aussi exactement renseignés sur les innombrables Bodhisattva peuplant les univers des dix régions. Pourtant, en ce qui concerne Mañjuśrī, nous disposons d'indications précises. Elles sont contenues dans le *Mañjuśrībuddhakṣetraguṇavyūha* dont nous possédons trois traductions chinoises et une traduction tibétaine:

A. Tr. ch. de Dharmarakṣa, exécutée en *290* (T 318, k. 2, p. 896 *c*–899 *b*).
B. Tr. ch. de Bodhiruci, exécutée entre *706 et 713* (T 310, k. 59, p. 345 *b*–347 *c*).
C. Tr. ch. d'Amoghavajra, exécutée au VIIIe siècle (T 319, k. 2–3, p. 912 *b*–915 *b*).
D. Tr. tib. (OKC 760, n° 15, vol. *Wi*, p. 315 *a*–325 *b*).

Autrefois, il y a de cela des Kalpa aussi nombreux que les sables de 70 myriades d'un nombre incalculable de Ganges, apparut dans le monde le Tathāgata nommé:

*Lei-yin-hiang* 雷音響, *Meghasvaraghoṣa* (A, p. 896 *c* 23).
*Lei-yin* 雷音, *Meghasvara* (B, p. 345 *b* II; C, p. 912 *b* 15).
*Ḥbrug sgraḥi dbyaṅs kyi rgyal po, Meghasvaraghoṣarāja* (D, p. 315 *b* 6).

Ce Buddha apparut dans la région de l'est, dans un univers séparé du nôtre par 72 *nayuta* de champs de Buddha. Et cet univers avait nom:

*K'ouai-tch'eng* 快成, *Promptement constitué* (A, p. 896 *c* 24).
*Wou-cheng* 無生, *Anutpādā* (B, p. 345 *b* 13; C, p. 912 *b* 18).
*Ḥbyuṅ ba bzaṅ po, Bhadrotpādā* (D, p. 315 *b* 8).

C'est en présence de ce Buddha et dans cet univers que le futur Mañjuśrī produisit la pensée de l'illumination (*bodhicitta*) et formula ses vœux. Mais en ce temps-là, Mañjuśrī était un roi pieux nommé:

*Ngan-pa* 安拔, *Sauveur de paix* (A, p. 896 *c* 27).
*P'ou-fou* 普覆, *Couverture universelle* (B, p. 345 b 15).
*Hiu-k'ong* 虛空, *Nam mkhaḥ, Ākāśa* (C, p. 912 *b* 20; D, p. 316 *a* I).

Mañjuśrī, bodhisattva de la dixième terre, retarde volontairement son arrivée à l'état de Buddha complètement accompli. C'est seulement après un nombre incalculable de périodes incalculables qu'il atteindra la suprême et parfaite illumination. Il sera alors le buddha nommé *Samantadarśin*:

*P'ou-hien* 普現 (A, p. 899 *a* 22).
*P'ou-kien* 普見 (B, p. 347 *b* 27; C, p. 915 *b* 6).
*Kun tu gzigs pa* (D, p. 324 *a* 3).

Il sera ainsi appelé „parce qu'il se fera voir partout dans les innombrables centaines de milliers de cent milliers de *nayuta* de buddhakṣetra"[49].

Cependant son univers propre, situé dans la région du sud comme notre univers Sahā, sera appelé *Li-tch'en-keou-sin* 離塵垢心, *Vimalacitta* (d'après A, p. 899 *b* II), *Ts'ing-tsing-wou-keou-pao* 清淨無垢寶, *Viśuddhavimalaratna* (d'après le *Karuṇāpuṇḍarīka*, T 157, k. 3, p. 188 *b* 2), ou *Vimalā* tout court (selon le *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, p. 265, l. 6).

Voici, pour étayer cet exposé, la traduction d'un passage du *Mañjuśrībuddhakṣetraguṇavyūha* selon la version de Bodhiruci (T 310, k. 59, p. 345 *b* 5–346 *b* 10):

> Alors le bodhisattva Siṃhavikramameghasvara dit au Buddha: Bienheureux, Mañjuśrī refuse de nous dire lui-même depuis quand il a produit la pensée de l'illumination (*bodhicitta*), et cependant toute cette grande assemblée voudrait le savoir.
>
> Le Buddha répondit: Fils du Victorieux (*jinaputra*), Mañjuśrī a une conviction profonde (*gambhīrakṣānti*) [concernant les dharma exempts de naissance], et dans cette conviction profonde il n'y a de place ni pour l'illumination (*bodhi*) ni pour la pensée (*citta*); comme elles n'existent pas, Mañjuśrī n'en parle pas. Cependant je vous dirai depuis quand il a produit la pensée de l'illumination.
>
> Autrefois — il y a de cela des Kalpa aussi nombreux que les sables de 70 myriades d'un nombre incalculable de Ganges —, un tathāgata, saint et parfaitement illuminé, à savoir le buddha Meghasvara, apparut dans le monde. Dans la région de l'est, par delà 72 *nayuta* de champs de Buddha, il est un univers nommé Anutpādā: c'est là que le tathāgata Meghasvara prêchait la loi; l'assemblée des Auditeurs (*śrāvaka*)

comptait 84 centaines de milliers de *nayuta* de personnes, et celle des Bodhisattva, deux fois autant.

En ce temps-la, il y avait un roi nommé *P'ou-fou* (variante, *Ākāśa*) qui possédait les sept joyaux (*saptaratna*) et régnait sur les quatre continents (*caturdvīpaka*). Il était pieux (*dhārmika*), un véritable roi à la roue de la Loi (*dharmacakrarāja*). Durant 84.000 années, il offrit en hommage au tathāgata Meghasvara et à la grande assemblée des Śrāvaka et des Bodhisattva des dons aussi variés qu'excellents: vêtements (*vastra*), nourriture (*āhāra*), palais (*prāsāda*), pavillons (*kūṭāgāra*), serviteurs (*dāsa*) et assistants (*upasthāyaka*). Parmi sa famille, les reines, les princes et les grands ministres n'avaient d'autre occupation que de faire des offrandes et, bien que les années s'accumulassent, ils n'en éprouvaient encore nulle fatigue.

Un jour finalement, le roi, qui s'était retiré daus la solitude (*ekākī rahogataḥ*), eut la réflexion suivante: J'ai accumulé de grandes racines de bien (*kuśalamūla*), mais je ne les ai pas encore appliquées (*pariṇam-*) de manière précise (*niyatam*). Faut-il les appliquer à devenir Śakra, Mahābrahmā, roi des dieux, Cakravartirāja, Śrāvaka ou Pratyekabuddha?

Tandis qu'il faisait ces réflexions, les dieux, du haut du ciel, lui dirent: Grand roi, ne faites pas des réflexions aussi mesquines (*hīna*). Les mérites (*puṇya*) accumulés par Votre Majesté sont si nombreux que vous devez produire la pensée de la suprême et parfaite illumination (*anuttarā samyak-saṃbodhiḥ*).

Le roi Ākāśa, entendant ces paroles, se dit tout joyeux: Je ne déchoierai jamais de l'illumination. Pourquoi? Parce que c'est en connaissant ma pensée que les dieux m'ont dit cela.

Alors le roi, avec une grande assemblée de 80 centaines de millers de *nayuta* de personnes, se rendit auprès du buddha Meghasvara. Il salua de la tête les pieds du Bienheureux, tourna sept fois autour de lui et, pour lui rendre hommage, il joignit les mains dans sa direction et lui adressa les stances suivantes:

1. J'ai une question à poser au Victorieux; je voudrais qu'il me dise comment j'obtiendrai la suprématie parmi les hommes de bien (*satpuruṣa*).
2. Devant vous qui êtes le support du monde, j'ai multiplié les offrandes (*pūjā*), mais sans intention précise et sans savoir à quoi les appliquer.
3. Aprés avoir cultivé de grands mérites, je me demandais à quoi les appliquer. Fallait-il ambitionner la position du dieu Brahmā, de Śakra ou d'un roi Cakravartin?
4. Fallait-il chercher à devenir un Śrāvaka ou un Pratyekabuddha? Tandis que je faisais ces réflexions, les dieux me dirent du haut du ciel:

5. „Grand roi, ne songez donc point à des applications aussi mesquines. „C'est pour tous les êtres qu'il faut formuler les grands vœux (*mahāpraṇidhāna*).
6. „C'est pour le bien du monde (*lokārthāya*) qu'il faut produire la pensée de l'illumination". C'est pourquoi je m'adresse maintenant au Bienheureux, au Souverain de la Loi (*dharmeśvara*):
7. Je voudrais qu'il me parle de la pensée de l'illumination et du moyen de la produire. Comment, après l'avoir produite, pourrais-je vous ressembler, ô Muni? Je prie le meilleur des bipèdes de me dire tout cela.

Alors lé tathāgata Meghasvara dit ces stances au roi Ākāśa:

1. Grand roi, écoutez bien. Je vais vous dire systématiquement (*krameṇa*) comment, en raison des causes et conditions (*het-upratyaya*), tous les dharma fonctionnent avec le désir (*chanda*) pour racine (*mūla*).
2. Le fruit (*phala*) obtenu est en conformité avec le vœu (*praṇidhāna*) formulé. Moi aussi, autrefois, j'ai produit le pensée de l'illumination.
3. J'ai fait le vœu d'assurer le bien (*hita*) de tous les êtres. Selon le vœu que j'avais formulé et selon la pensée que j'avais produite,
4. J'ai obtenu l'illumination sans recul (*avaivarlikabodhi*) et mes aspirations (*āśaya*) furent rapidement comblées (*paripūrṇa*). Grand roi, exercez donc fermement les pratiques (*caryā*),
5. Vous obtiendrez la pleine et suprême illumination des Buddha.

Lorsque le roi Ākāśa entendit ces paroles du Buddha, il bondit de joie et fut dans l'émerveillement (*adbhutaprāpta*); en présence de l'assemblée, il poussa le rugissement du lion (*siṃhanāda*) et dit ces stances: Aujourd'hui, en face de tous les êtres, j'applique ma pensée à la parfaite illumination (*utpādayāmi saṃbodhau cittam*).

1. Du début à la fin de l'infinie transmigration, je suivrai une interminable carrière.
2. „Produisons la pensée de la parfaite illumination en présence de notre Protecteur": voilà comment j'invite le monde entier, et je le sauverai de la pauvreté.
3. Si, à partir d'aujourd'hui, je produisais encore une pensée de désir (*kāmacitta*), je tromperais tous les Buddha établis dans les dix régions.
4. A partir d'aujourd'hui jusqu'au moment où j'obtiendrai l'illumination, je n'aurai plus aucune pensée de méchanceté, de vanité, de jalousie ou d'avarice.
5. Je pratiquerai la continence et j'abandonnerai les mauvais désirs. J'imiterai les Buddha dans leur discipline et le contrôle des sens.

6. Je n'ai aucun empressement à atteindre l'illumination et je demeurerai ici-bas jusqu'au bout, tant qu'il restera un être à sauver.
7. Je purifierai un champ immense, inconcevable, et je rendrai mon nom illustre dans les dix régions.
8. Aujourd'hui je me prédis à moi-même que je deviendrai sûrement Buddha. Ma résolution (*adhyāśaya*) est pure (*viśuddha*): il n'y a là aucun doute (*saṃśaya*).
9. Je purifierai de toute manière les actes du corps et de la voix; je purifierai les actes mentaux et je ne commettrai aucun acte impur[50].
10. Si vraiment je dois devenir un Buddha, vénérable entre tous les hommes, qu'en raison de cette vérité la terre tremble de six manières.
11. Si je dis la vérité (*satya*) et s'il n'y a pas d'erreur (*bhrānta*) en moi, qu'en raison de cette vérité, les musiques (*tūrya*) jouent du haut du ciel.
12. Si je suis sans hypocrisie (*śāṭhya*) ni pensée de haine (*khilacitta*), qu'en raison de cette vérité tombe une pluie de fleurs de mandāra.

Lorsque le roi Ākāśa eut dit ces stances, il se fit qu'en raison de sa sincérité les 100.000 champs des dix régions tremblèrent de six manières, des musiques jouèrent dans le ciel et des fleurs de mandāra tombèrent en pluie. Vingt centaines de milliers d'êtres, à la suite du roi, éprouvèrent une grande joie et se félicitèrent en disant: „Nous aussi nous obtiendrons la suprême illumination", et à l'instar du roi ils produisirent la pensée de l'illumination.

Alors le Buddha déclara à la grande assemblée: Ce roi Ākāśa n'était autre que l'actuel bodhisattva Mañjuśrī. Il y a des Kalpa aussi nombreux que les sables de 70 myriades d'un nombre incalculable de Ganges qu'il a, pour la première fois, produit la pensée de l'illumination (*cittotpāda*). Il y a des Kalpa aussi nombreux que les sables de 64 Ganges qu'il a obtenu la conviction relative aux dharma exempts de naissance (*anutpattikadharmakṣānti*). Enfin, il a conquis la dixième terre (*bhūmi*) des Bodhisattva et les dix forces (*bala*) des Tathāgata. Mais, bien que toutes les qualités de la terre des Buddha soient accomplies (*paripūrṇa*) en lui, Mañjuśrī n'a pas songé un seul instant à devenir sur le champ un Buddha [parfaitement accompli].

Alors, quand ces vingt centaines de millers d'êtres, à la suite du roi, eurent produit, en présence du Buddha Meghasvara, la pensée de l'illumination, le bodhisattva Mañjuśrī les invita à entrer dans les vertus du don (*dāna*), de la moralité (*śīla*), de la patience (*kṣṇti*), de l'énergie (*vīrya*), de l'extase (*dhyāna*) et de la sagesse (*prajñā*). Aussitôt, ils obtinrent tous la suprême et parfaite illumination; ils firent tourner la roue de la Loi et, après avoir rempli leur œuvre de Buddha, ils entrèrent dans

le Nirvāṇa complet. Quant à Mañjuśrī, il servit tous ces Tathāgata et protégea la Loi de tous ces Buddha.

[Parmi tous ces Buddha, un seul existe encore maintenant]. Il y a un Buddha nommé *Ti-tch'e-chan* 地持山, *Bhūmidharaparvata* (variantes: *Ti-t'ien* 地天, *Saḥi lha = Bhūmideva*). Il se trouve en direction du nadir par delà des univers aussi nombreux que les sables de 40 Ganges. L'univers de ce Buddha est appelé *Ti-tch'e* 地持, *Bhm̃idhara* (variantes: *Ti* 地 = *Bhūmi; Ti-ti* 地底 „Base de la terre"; *Saḥi dbyaṅs = Bhūmisvara*); il renferme une assemblée immense de Śrāvaka. Ce Buddha, dont la durée de vie est illimitée, existe encore maintenant.

## IV. Les traits caractéristiques de Mañjuśrī

En vérité absolue (*paramārthasatya*), les Bodhisattva ne s'écartent pas de la manière d'être (*tathatā*) des choses et se confondent dans la même absence de nature propre (*niḥsvabhāvatā*). En vérité relative (*saṃvṛtisatya*), il y a entre eux d'infinies variétés, comme il ressort d'une section de la *Prajñāpāramitā* consacrée aux diverses classes de Bodhisattva[51].

Le principe de classement est la durée de la carrière du Bodhisattva, le temps plus ou moins long qui s'écoule entre la première production du *bodhicitta* et l'arrivée à *l'anuttarasamyaksaṃbodhi*. Une première catégorie arrivera lentement, une deuxième plus vite et une troisième à l'instant même. De même, pour un long voyage, ceux qui partent sur un véhicule tiré par des moutons, sur un véhicule tiré par des chevaux, ou qui partent par le pouvoir magique[52].

Deux cas limites sont envisagés. Il y a des Bodhisattva qui, dès qu'ils produisent la pensée de Bodhi, obtiennent la suprême Bodhi. Après avoir fait tourner la roue de la Loi et sauvé des êtres innombrables, ils entrent dans le Nirvāṇa complet (*nirupadhiśeṣanirvāṇa*). Après leur Parinirvāṇa, leur Loi subsistera un Kalpa ou plus[53]. Ces Bodhisattva ont un grand dégoût de l'existence; pendant les âges révolus, ils ont aimé la réalité et haï l'erreur; ils sont de facultés aiguës et de pensée ferme; ils ont longtemps accumulé mérite et savoir[54]. De là leur hâte à franchir d'un bond la carrière du Bodhisattva et à entrer au plus tôt dans le Nirvāṇa définitif.

L'autre cas limite est celui des Bodhisattva qui, animés d'une grande bienveillance et d'une grande compassion, entendent se consacrer le plus longtemps possible au bien et au bonheur de tous les êtres. Mañjuśrī est de ceux-là. Dès le début de la transmigration il a, en la personne du roi Ākāśa, produit la pensée de Bodhi et formulé, devant le buddha Meghasvara, le vœu de demeurer en transmigration tant qu'il resterait ne fût-ce qu'un seul être à convertir. Il a consacré d'innombrables Kalpa à franchir les étapes de la carrière des Bodhisattva, à accéder de la première terre à la huitième qui en fit un Bodhisattva sans recul (*avaivartika*), de la huitième à la dixième qui en fit un Bodhisattva séparé de l'état de Buddha par une existence seulement (*ekajātipratibaddha*), un prince héritier (*kumārabhūta*) associé au pouvoir royal. Bodhisattva de la

dixième terre, il retarde indéfiniment son accession à la suprême et parfaite illumination.

Il arrive un moment en effet où le Buddha pleinement et parfaitement illuminé, jugeant sa Loi bien prêchée et sa Communauté bien établie, „rejette les forces vitales" (*āyuḥsaṃskārān utsṛjati*) et entre dans le Nirvāṇa sans reste de conditionnement (*nirupadhiśeṣanirvāṇa*)[55]. Dès lors, ni les dieux ni les hommes ne le voient plus[56]. De même que la flamme atteinte par le souffle du vent va vers l'apaisement, échappe au regard, ainsi le Sage dépouillant les agrégats psycho-physiques de l'existence, entre dans l'apaisement, échappant à tous les regards. Nul ne peut le mesurer; pour parler de lui, il n'y a point de paroles; ce que l'esprit pourrait concevoir s'évanouit et tout chemin est interdit au langage[57].

Inspiré par la grande pitié, Mañjuśrī se détourne du Nirvāṇa afin de poursuivre son œuvre salvifique. Il reste „toujours jeune", en possession de tous ses moyens. Ceux-ci sont considérables car, en sa qualité de Bodhisattva de la dixième terre, il jouit de la „perfection des qualités de Buddha" (*buddhaguṇasampad*).

Tout au long du saṃsāra, il se manifeste en Inde, dans l'univers à quatre continents et dans les grands chiliocosmes répartis à l'infini dans les dix régions. C'est là que „le Bodhisattva, doué de pouvoirs psychiques inconevables (*acintyavimokṣa*), se manifeste sous les apparences diverses d'un Buddha, d'un Pratyekabuddha, d'un Śrāvaka, d'un Bodhisattva orné des marques, d'un Brahmā, d'un Śakra devendra, d'un Cāturmahārājika deva, d'un roi Cakravartin: bref, de n'importe quel être"[58].

Il est tout naturel qu'un Bodhisattva se manifeste sous la forme d'un Bodhisattva ou de tout autre être de catégorie inférieure au Bodhisattva. Il est plus curieux qu'il puisse prendre les apparences d'un Buddha accompli. Et cependant les textes sont formels à cet égard:

> Le Bodhisattva établi dans les dix terres, entrant dans la concentration de la Marche héroïque (*śūraṃgamasamādhi*), manifeste dans le trichiliomégа-chiliocosme la première production de la pensée de Bodhi (*prathamacittotpāda*), ou la pratique des six vertus (*ṣaṭpāramitācaryā*), ou le stade du Bodhisattva sans recul (*avaivartika*), ou le stade du Bodhisattva séparé de l'état de Buddha par une seule renaissance (*ekajātipratibaddha*), ou la montée au ciel des Tuṣita où il prêche la Loi aux dieux, ou la descenteduciel des Tuṣita et la naissance dans le palais de Śuddhodana, ou la sortie du monde (*abhiniṣkramaṇa*) et l'accession à l'état de Buddha, ou la motion de la roue de la Loi (*dharmacakrapravartana*) au milieu de la grande assemblée, ou l'entrée dans le Nirvāṇa et l'érection du Stūpa des sept joyaux s'étendant dans les pays pour que les êtres vénèrent les reliques, ou enfin le moment où la Loi est complètement éteinte[59].

Le Bodhisattva tire ce pouvoir du Śūraṃgamasamādhi, concentration réservée à la dixième terre[60], et qui présente cent caractéristiques dont la centième et dernière consiste à „entrer dans le Grand Nirvāṇa, mais sans s'éteindre définitivement"[61].

> Considère, dit le Buddha à Kāśyapa, la puissance du *Śūraṃgamasamādhi*. Par sa force, les grands Bodhisattva manifestent l'entré dans la matrice (*garbhāvakrānti*), la naissance (*janman*), la sortie du monde (*abhiniṣkramaṇa*), la marche à l'arbre de l'illumination (*bodhivṛkṣagamana*), l'installation sur le trône de l'illumination (*bodhimaṇḍaniṣadana*), la motion de la roue de la loi (*dharmacakrapravartana*), l'entrée dans le Nirvāṇa complet (*parinirvāṇapraveśa*) et le partage des reliques (*śarīrānupradāna*): cependant ils n'abandonnent pas leur qualité de Bodhisattva et ils ne s'éteignent pas définitivement (*atyantam*) dans le Parinirvāṇa[62].

C'est ainsi que, jusqu'à la fin des temps, Mañjuśrī se manifestera sous les formes les plus diverses, jusque et y compris celle de Buddha pleinement et parfaitement illuminé ou de Buddha parinirvâné. Cependant il ne perdra pas sa qualité de Bodhisattva. Finalement, lorsqu'il ne restera plus aucun être à convertir, il atteindra, pour de bon cette fois, la suprême et parfaite illumination. Il sera alors le tathāgata Samantadarśin et occupera, dans la région du Sud, l'univers Vimalā.

Il semble que les vieux théoriciens du bouddhisme aient encore décelé en Mañjuśrī un trait particulier, sans grande importance, mais qui ne manque pas d'intérêt. Certains Bodhisattva, Samantabhadra par exemple, sont d'une activité débordante: ils font apparaître simultanément d'innombrables champs de Buddha et y jouent les rôles les plus divers. Ils n'ont point de résidence fixe. Moins pressé, plus méthodique, Mañjuśrī série ses manifestations et n'apparaît qu'en un endroit à la fois. Il est donc loisible à quiconque possède l'œil divin de suivre son histoire et de dénombrer ses résidences successives. Ainsi l'auteur du *Śūraṃgamasamādhisūtra* croit pouvoir affirmer que Mañjuśrī entra dans le Nirvāṇa par le Véhicule des Pratyekabuddha, durant 360 myriades de générations[63].

On ne fera grief à l'*Upadeśa* d'aboutir dans ses calculs à un chiffre différent:

> Le bodhisattva Samantabhadra fait ordinairement apparaitre dans chacun des pores de sa peau les univers de Buddha, les Buddha et les Bodhisattva qui remplissent les dix régions. Comme il transforme les êtres, il n'a pas de résidence fixe. Mais Mañjuśrī, lui, série ses propres métamorphoses (*nirmāṇa*) pour entrer dans les cinq destinées (*gati*): tantôt il est Śrāvaka, tantôt Pratyekabuddha et tantôt Buddha. Ainsi il est dit dans le *Śūraṃgamasamādhisūtra* que le bodhisattva Mañjuśrī fut, dans les générations passées, le buddha Nāgavaṃśāgra, et que,

> durant 72 myriades de générations, il fut un Pratyekabuddha. De telles métamorphoses sont susceptibles d'être mentionnées et stipulées. Quant à Samantabhadra, il échappe au calcul et à la mention: ses résidences (*sthāna*) sont inconnaissables. S'il réside quelque part, c'est dans tous les univers indistinctement[64].

On se bornera ici à relever, sur le témoignage des textes, quelques apparitions de Mañjuśrī dans les grandes sphères cosmiques des dix régions où il se manifeste tantôt comme Bodhisattva du présent, tantôt comme Buddha du présent ou du passé. Ensuite, on passera en revue les divers endroits de l'Inde, de l'Asie Centrale et de l'Extrême Orient où ses dévots pensent l'avoir rencontré.

## V. Mañjuśrī dans les sphères cosmiques

### *1. Mañjuśrī, bodhisattva du présent*

1. Dans l'introduction de la *Pañcaviṃśati-* et de la *Śatasāhasrikā Prajñāpārmitā*, Śākyamuni transforme en joyau l'univers Sahā:

> On eût dit l'univers Padmāvatī, champ de Buddha du tathāgata Samantakusuma, où résident le bodhisattva Mañjuśrī, le bodhisattva Susthitamatiet d'autres Bodhisattva très puissants[65].

2. Le *Saṃvṛtiparamārthasatyanirdeśa* mentionne Mañjuśrī dans un passage qui nous est conservé dans trois traductions chinoises et une traduction tibétaine:

A. Tr. ch. de Dharmarakṣa, exécutée en 289 (T 460, p. 448 *b* 7–10).
B. Tr. ch. de Kumārajīva qui vécut de 344 à 409 (T 1489, p. 1075 *c* 14–17).
C. Tr. ch. de Fai hai des Song entre 960 et 1279 (T 1490, p. 1081 *a* 23–24).
D. Tr. tib. de Śākyaprabha, Jinamitra, Dharmatāśīla, etc. (OKC 846, p. 255 *b* 4–6):

> Quand, en partant d'ici, on franchit en direction de l'est dix mille champs de Buddha, il y a un univers nommé Ratnāvatī:
>
> *Pao-che* 寶氏 (A); *Pao-tchou* | 主 (B); *Pao-tchou* | 住 (C); *Rin po che dan ldan pa* (D).
>
> C'est là que le Tathāgata, arhat et samyaksaṃbuddha appelé Ratnaketu:
>
> *Pao-ying* 寶英 (A); *Pao-siang* | 相 (B et C); *Rin po cheḥi tog* (D),
>
> se trouve (*tiṣṭhati*), vit (*dhriyate*) et existe (*yāpayati*) actuellement. C'est là aussi que Mañjuśrī kumārabhūta se trouve actuellement.

3. Dans les deux versions chinoises de l'*Avataṃsaka* exécutées respectivement par Buddhabhadra entre 418 et 420, et par Śikṣānanda entre 695 et 699, le Buddha déclare:

> En direction de l'est, par delà des univers aussi nombreux que les poussières (*rajas*) de dix champs de Buddha, il est un univers nommé *Kin-sö* 金色 (*Suvarṇavarṇa*), et son buddha a nom *Pou-tong-tche* 不動智 (*Acalajñāna*). Le bodhisattva Mañjuśrī, avec des Bodhisattva aussi nombreux que les poussières de dix champs de Buddha, s'est rendu auprès de ce Buddha. Après lui avoir rendu hommage et salué ses pieds en les touchant de la tête, il a créé par métamorphose, dans cette région de l'est, un trône de lotus (*padmasiṃhāsana*) et s'y est assis les jambes croisées[65].

3. Dans le *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*, dont une traduction chinoise fut exécutée par T'ien-si-tsai entre 980 et 1.000, le Buddha déclare:

> En direction du nord-est, par delà des univers aussi nombreux que les sables de cent mille Ganges, il y a un univers *K'ai-houa* 開華 (*Saṃkusumita*), et son buddha a nom *K'ai-houa-wang jou-lai* 開華王如來(*Saṃkusumitarājendratathāgata*). Celui-ci possède un prince héritier nommé Mañjuśrī[67].

### *2. Mañjuśrī, buddha du présent*

La recension longue de l'*Aṅgulimālīyasūtra* nous est connue par une version chinoise (T 120) exécutée entre 436 et 443 par Guṇabhadra, un moine de l'Inde Centrale, et une traduction tibétaine (OKC 879) due à la collaboration de Śākyaprabha, Dharmatāśīla et Toṅa-ca-la.

> Alors le Buddha dit au roi Prasenajit: Dans la région du nord, par delà des univers aussi nombreux que les sables de 42 Ganges, il y a un univers nommé *Tch'ang-hi* 常喜 (*Nityapramuditā*). Le buddha nommé *Houan-hi-tsang-mo-ni-pao-tsi* 歡喜藏摩尼寶積 (*Pramuditāgarbhamaṇiratnakūṭa*), tathāgata, saint et parfaitement illuminé, y prêche et convertit actuellement, Cet univers n'a ni Śrāvaka ni Pratyekabuddha. On n'y pratique qu'un unique Grand Véhicule. Les noms des autres Véhicules y sont inconnus, de même que les mots vieillesse (*jarā*), maladie (*vyādhi*) et douleur (*duḥkha*). Il est tout plaisir (*sukha*); la durée de vie (*āyus*) y est illimitée; il y règne un éclat (*tejas*) immense (*apramāṇa*) et sans pareil (*anupama*). C'est pourquoi cet univers est appelé Nityapramuditā « Toujours joyeux ». Quant à son Buddha, ô roi, vous devez l'honorer joyeusement et les mains jointes. Ce Buddha n'est autre que Mañjuśrī. Les êtres qui honorent et vénèrent Aṅgulimālīya et

Mañjuśrī ou qui entendent les noms de ces deux hommes voient l'univers Nityapramuditā comme leur maison à eux. Ceux qui entendent leurs noms ferment pour toujours la porte aux quatre destinées mauvaises (*durgati*). Fussent-ils même moqueurs, querelleurs, ambitieux, intéressés ou hérétiques, fussent-ils coupables des *pārājika* ou des cinq péchés *ānantarya*, qu'ils fermeront quand même la porte aux quatre destinées mauvaises. Les fils et les filles de famille, protégés par ces deux noms, tant dans l'existence présente que dans les existences futures, demeurent à l'abri au milieu du désert (*kāntāra*), des dangers et des craintes (*bhaya*): en tout lieu, les craintes s'évanouissent. Les Deva, Nāga, Yakṣa, Gandharva, Asura, Garuḍa, Kiṃnara, Mahoraga et Piśāca ne peuvent les atteindre[68].

### *3. Mañjuśrī, buddha du passé et parinirvâné*

1. Dans le vieux *Śūraṃgamaśamādhisūtra* (T 642; OKC 800), on trouve ce fameux dialogue concernant le Parinirvāṇa provisoire de Mañjuśrī:

Kāśyapa dit au Buddha: Selon moi, ô Bhagavat, Mañjuśrī kumārabhūta, dans les temps passés, a déja fait œuvre de Buddha: il s'est assis sur le *bodhimaṇḍa*, il a fait tourner la roue de la Loi, il a enseigné les êtres et il est entré dans le grand Nirvāṇa.

Le Buddha répondit: C'est exact, c'est bien comme tu dis, ô Kāśyapa. Dans le passé, — il y a de cela d'innombrables, infinies et inconcevables périodes incalculables (*asaṃkhyeyakalpa*) — exista un buddha nommé *Long-tchong-chang* 龍種上 (*Kluḥi rigs mchog* = *Nāgavaṃśāgra*). Si, partant d'ici en direction du sud, on franchit mille champs de Buddha, on trouve un univers nommé *P'ing-teng* 平等 (*Mñam pa* = *Samā*). Il n'a ni montagnes (*parvata*), ni fleuves (*nadī*), ni galets (*śarkara*), ni pierres (*pāṣāṇa*), ni mottes de terre (*loṣṭa*), ni monticules. Son sol est uni comme la paume de la main (*karatala*), et ses herbes sont tendres (*mṛdu*) comme le tissu kācalindika. Dans cet univers, le buddha Nāgavaṃśāgra a obtenu la suprême et parfaite illumination; il a fait tourner la roue de la Loi et converti une foule de 70 centaines de milliers de Bodhisattva. Quatre-vingts centaines de milliers d'êtres sont devenus arhat et 96.000 êtres s'en tinrent à la loi des causes et effets des Pratyekabuddha. A la longue, il disposait d'une immense communauté de disciples (*śrāvakasaṃgha*). Le buddha Nāgavaṃśāgra eut une durée de vie de 440 myriades d'années. Après avoir sauvé les dieux et les hommes, il entra dans le Nirvāṇa. Ses reliques (*śarīra*) se répandirent partout, et les êtres élevèrent en son honneur 36 centaines de milliers de stūpa. Après le Parinirvāṇa de ce Buddha, sa Loi subsista dix myriades d'années.

Quand le buddha Nāgavaṃśāgra était sur le point d'entrer en Nirvāṇa, il avait donné la prédiction (*vyākaraṇa*) au bodhisattva *Tche-*

> *ming* 智明 (*Ye śes ḥod = Jñānaprabha*) et lui avait dit: „Après moi, tu obtiendras la suprême et parfaite illumination et tu t'appeleras Jñānaprabha."
>
> Pourrait-il après cela, ô Kāśyapa, te rester quelque incertitude (*kāṅkṣā*), quelque perplexité (*vimati*) ou quelque doute (*vicikitsā*)? Il ne faut pas t'imaginer que, dans ce temps-là et à cette époque, le buddha Nāgavaṃśāgra de l'univers Samā fut un autre [que Mañjuśrī]. Pourquoi? Parce que c'était bien Mañjuśrī kumārabhūta[69].

Ajoutons que les textes indiens et chinois ont de fréquentes all usions au buddha Nāgavaṃśāgra[70].

2. A ma connaissance, le volumineux *Bodhisattvakeyūrasūtra* n'existe qu'en traduction chinoise (T 656). Elle fut exécutée durant la seconde moitié du IVe siècle par Tchou Fo-nien, originaire de Leang-tcheou, dans les régions frontières où sa famille résidait depuis des générations. Tchou Fo-nien, qui travailla à Tch'ang-ngan de 365 jusqu'à sa mort, fut un linguiste de première valeur, rompu au sanskrit et aux langues d'Asie Centrale. On le considère comme le précurseur de Kumārajīva.

Dans le sūtra en question, se lit le passage suivant:

> Autrefois, — il y a de cela d'innombrables périodes incalculables — il y eut un Buddha nommé *Ta-chen* 大身 (*Mahākāya*). Son champ s'appelait *K'ong-tsi* 空寂 (*Śūnyā*). C'est là qu'il atteignit la suprême et parfaite illumination et prêcha à la quadruple assemblée les quatre vérités saintes de la Bonne loi. Il convertit les êtres et les amena au *nirupadhiśeṣanirvāṇadhātu* et à l'extinction (*nirodha*) ... Pourrait-il après cela vous rester quelque incertitude? Il ne faut pas vous imaginer que, dans ce temps-là et à cette époque, le tathāgata Mahākāya qui prêcha la Loi pure, sans figure et invisible, fut un autre [que Mañjuśrī]. Pourquoi? Parce que le tathāgata Mahākāya était bien Mañjuśrī ici présent[71].

Il faut se borner à enregistrer ces témoignages, mais on notera que les apparitions de Mañjuśrī ne sont nullement liées à une direction déterminée. Les univers où il se manifeste sont situés tantôt à l'est (Anutpādā, Padmāvatī, Ratnāvatī, Suvarṇavarṇā), tantôt au sud (Samā, Vimalā), toutôt au nord (Nityapramuditā) et tantôt au nord-est (Saṃkusumitā).

## VI. Mañjuśrī en Inde

### *1. Mañjuśrī au Kosala, dans l'Himālaya et au Gandhamādana*

L'un des textes les plus intéressants concernant le présent sujet est le *Mañjuśrīparinirvāṇasūtra* traduit en chinois, à la fin du IIIe siècle, par Nie Tao-tchen

聶道眞 qui fut, on l'a vu, le collaborateur et le continuateur de Dharmarakṣa. Le titre *Wen chou che li pan nie p'an king* (T 463) prête à confusion. Il ne s'agit pas du Nirvāṇa définitif que Mañjuśrī prendra seulement à la fin des temps, mais de l'un de ces Nirvāṇa provisoires que, par artifice salvifique, Mañjuśrī manifeste au cours de la concentration de la Marche héoīque. Il serait plus exact d'intituler ce texte *Mañjuśrī-śūraṃgamasamādhi*.

Il découpe, dans les aventures de Mañjuśrī, une période de 450 années et relate quatre incidents différents.

A l'époque de Śākyamuni, Mañjuśrī prend naissance au Kosala, dans une famille de brâhmanes, au village de *To-lo* 多羅. Le renseignement est confirmé par le *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* mahâyâniste (T 374, k. 3, p. 379 *b* 27; T 375, k. 3, p. 619 *b* 5), qui signale dans l'assemblée „la présence d'un Bodhisattva mahāsattva qui était originellement un homme du village de To-lo". To-lo ne représente pas le sanskrit Tāra: c'est une transcription apocopée pour Uttara. Il s'agit du village d'Uttaranigama situé à l'est de Śrāvastī, chez les Koḷiya, peuplade voisine et rivale des Śākya. Le Buddha y eut un entretien avec le maire Pāṭaliya (*Saṃyutta* IV, p. 340 sq.) et y exposa, en partie tout au moins, la *Méthode sommaire des arcanes du Dhyāna* (T 613, k. 2, p. 258 *b* 25–26). Le *Madhyamāgama* traduit Uttara-nigama par *Pei-ts'ouen* 北村 „Village du Nord" (T 26, k. 4, p. 445 *a* 28); le *Fa kiu p'i yu king* qui le situe à l'est de Śrāvastī, le transcrit par *Yu-to-lo-po-t'i* 鬱多羅波提, Uttarāvatī (T 211, k. 2, p. 591 *c* 18).

Voulant embrasser la vie religieuse, Mañjuśrī s'adresse tout d'abord aux brâhmanes et aux maîtres d'enseignement. Leurs instructions ne le satisfaisant point, il va trouver Śākyamuni et entre dans l'ordre bouddhique. Cependant, bodhisattva de la dixième terre, il demeure la plupart du temps dans la concentration de la Marche héroīque.

Quatre cent cinquante ans après le Nirvāṇa de Śākyamuni, il se rend sur le Mont *Siue chan* 雪山 „Mont des neiges". Ces deux caractères traduisent couramment le sanskrit *Himavat, Himavata* ou *Himavanta* désignant l'actuel Himālaya[72]. Mañjuśrī y convertit 500 ermites (*ṛṣi*) à la Loi du Grand Véhicule et les fait accéder à l'état de Bodhisattva „sans recul" (8e terre). Avec leur aide, il fabrique une statue miraculeuse de bhikṣu et, avec elle, rentre à sa terre natale, sans doute le Kosala.

Mañjuśrī se retire alors dans la jungle et, assis sous un arbre nyagrodha, entre dans la concentration de la Marche héroīque. Le texte ne dit pas expressément qu'il prend le Nirvāṇa, mais le contexte permet de le supposer. Il s'agit évidemment d'un Nirvāṇa fictif, simple artifice salvifique, qui n'empêche pas le grand Bodhisattva de poursuivre son action bienfaisante. Il laisse d'ailleurs pour le remplacer sa statue miraculeuse, capable d'accomplir les mêmes prodiges que lui.

Après sa mort, huit grandes divinités recueillent Mañjuśrī et le déposent sur le sommet de diamant (*vajraśikhā*) du Mont *Hiang chan* 香山 „Mont des parfums" où d'innombrables Deva, Nāga et Yakṣa viendront toujours l'honorer.

Le Mont *Hiang* (variantes: *Hiang-tsouei* 香醉; *Hiang-tsi* 香積) est le Gandhamādana „la montagne qui enivre par ses parfums" (*gandhena madakaro*

*pabbato*), mont mythique situé quelque part dans l'Himālaya et extrêmement célèbre dans la légende indienne en général et bouddhique en particulier[73]. On lit dans le Sūtra cosmologique du *Dīrghāgama*:

> Sur le flanc droit de l'Himavat, il y a une ville nommée Vaiśālī. Au nord de cette ville, il y a les sept Kālaparvata. Au nord des sept Kālaparvata, il y a le Mont Gandhamādana, Sur ce mont il y a toujours des bruits de chants et de musique. Ce mont a deux grottes (*guhā*), la première nommée *Tcheou* 晝 „Jour", et la seconde *Chan-tcheou* 善晝 „Bon jour". Faites des sept joyaux précieux, elles dégagent de doux parfums comme les vêtements des dieux. *Miao-yin* 妙音 (Mañjughoṣa), le roi des Gandharva, entouré de cinq cents Gandharva, y habite. Au nord des deux grottes, il y a le roi des arbres Śāla (Vatica robusta) nommé Supratiṣṭhita ... Au pied de Supratiṣṭhita, le roi des arbres, il y a le nāgarāja nommé, lui aussi, Supratiṣṭhita ... Au nord du roi des arbres Supratiṣṭhita, il y a le grand lac Mandākinī, d'une profondeur et d'une largeur de cinquante yojana ... Son eau est fraîche (*ts'ing-leang* 清涼, *śīta*) et sans souillure[74].

Les sources pāli et notamment le *Commentaire du Suttanipāta* (I, p. 66–67) donnent des renseignements assez approchants: Le flanc *Nandamūlaka* du Gandhamādana contient trois grottes habitées par des pratyekabuddha: *Suvaṇṇa-, Maṇi- et Rājata-guhā*. A l'entrée de la Maṇiguhā se trouve l'arbre mythique nommé Mañjūsaka.

En tout état de cause, le Gandhamādana était fréquenté par les Ṛṣi et les Pratyekabuddha et servait de résidence au roi des Gandharva Mañjughoṣa, encore nommé Pañcaśikha, avec lequel le bodhisattva Mañjuśrī avait partie liée, ainsi qu'on l'a vu au début de cet article. Le Gandhamādana était tout désigné pour servir de sépulture provisoire à Mañjuśrī.

Il y a plus: l'épithète de *pañcaśikha* appliquée au roi des Gandharva et celle de *pañcacīra* attribuée à Mañjuśrī dérivent peut-être de la configuration de la grande chaîne himālayenne où ils étaient vénérés. Cette chaîne était couronnée par cinq pics (*pañcaśikhā* ou *pañcaśīrṣa*) entourant le lac fameux de l'Anavatapta „le lac qui ne dégèle jamais"[75]. On lit dans le *Commentaire de l'Udāna* (p. 300):

> Le lac Anavatapta est entouré par cinq pics de montagnes (*pabbatakūṭa*) appelés respectivement Sudarśana, Citra, Kāla, Gandhamādana et Kailāsa. Le Sudarśana est d'or; sa hauteur est de trois cents yojana et il se termine en bec de corbeau. Le Citra est fait des sept joyaux. Le Kāla est en antimoine (*añjana*). Le Gandhamādana est en *sānu* (?); à l'intérieur, il a la couleur de la fève (*mugga*); il abonde en dix sortes de parfums: parfums de racines, d'aubier, de bois tendre, d'écorce, de bourgeons, de sève, de fleurs, de fruits de feuilles et de

> parfums; il est recouvert de toutes espèces de plantes, et il brille comme un charbon ardent durant la pleine lune. Le Kailāsa est en argent. Tous ces pics, égaux en hauteur et en forme au Sudarśana, se dressent au dessus du lac.

Quel que soit notre scepticisme à l'endroit de l'exégèse mythologique, nous sommes forcés de constater le rapport étroit qui unit Mañjuśrī à la Montagne aux cinq pics, soit que le bodhisattva lui donne son nom, soit qu'il en tire son titre de *pañcaśikha*. Aut ex re nomen, aut ex vocabulo fabula!

De toute manière, au fur et à mesure qu'il se répandra en Asie Centrale, au Tibet, en Extrême-Orient, le culte de Mañjuśrī sera invariablement localisé sur une chaîne de montagnes à cinq pics, entourant un lac. Il s'agit d'une véritable constante.

Ces quelques indications étaient indispensables pour interpréter le *Mañjuśrīparinirvāṇasūtra* (T 463), dont voici la traduction complète:

> Voici ce que j'ai entendu. Une fois le Bienheureux se tenait à Śrāvastī, au Jetavana, dans le jardin d'Anāthapiṇḍada, avec une grande troupe de bhikṣu, huit mille bhikṣu ayant en tête les vénérables Sāriputra, Mahāmaudgalyāyana, Mahākāśyapa, Mahākātyāyana, etc. Il y avait aussi les Bodhisattva mahāsattva formant le groupe des seize Honnêtes hommes (*ṣoḍaśa satpuruṣa*), les mille Bodhisattva de la Bonne période (*bhadrakalpa*) précédés par Maitreya, et douze cents Bodhisattva venus des sphères cosmiques étrangères, précédés par Avalokiteśvara. Alors le Bienheureux, durant la dernière veille de la nuit (*paścime yāme*), entra dans la concentration dite Concentration de tous les éclats (*sarvālokasamādhi*). Aussitôt son corps émit un éclat d'or (*suvarṇavarṇāloka*) qui remplit tout le Jetavana et lui donna une teinte dorée. S'insinuant en tournant, l'éclat alla illuminer la demeure de Mañju et la transforma en sept étages d'or (*suvarṇakūṭāgāra*). Sur chacun de ces étages, il y avait cinq cents Buddha fictifs (*nirmāṇabuddha*), allant et venant sur les étages.
>
> Alors, devant la demeure de Mañjuśrī, apparurent spontanément et par métamorphose (*nirmāṇa*) cinq cents lotus faits des sept joyaux (*saptaratnamayāni padmāni*): ils étaient ronds comme la roue d'un char, leurs tiges étaient d'argent (*rajata*), leurs corolles de saphir (*musāragalva*) et d'émeraude (*aśmagarbha*), et leurs étamines en perles (*muktikā*) de couleurs variées. L'éclat de ces fleurs alla illuminer le vihāra du Buddha; puis, sortant du vihāra, retournait à la demeure de Mañjuśrī.
>
> Alors il y avait dans l'assemblée un Bodhisattva mahāsattva nommé Bhadrapāla. A l'apparition de ce bon augure, Bhadrapāla sortit de sa demeure pour se rendre au vihāra du Buddha. Arrivé à la cellule d'Ānanda, il dit à ce dernier: Ānanda il faut que tu saches que cette nuit

même le Bhagavat a manifesté les signes de son pouvoir miraculeux (*ṛddhinimitta*) et que, pour le bien des êtres (*sattvahitāya*), il va prêcher la Bonne loi. Sonne donc la cloche (*ghaṇṭhā*).

Ānanda répondit: Saint homme (*satpuruṣa*), le Bienheureux est, pour le moment, en profonde concentration (*gambhīrasamādhi*); il ne m'a pas donné d'ordre. Pourquoi réunir l'assemblée?

Quand Ānanda eut fait ces mots, Śāriputra se rendit auprès de lui et lui dit: Disciple, c'est le moment convenable pour réunir l'assemblée!

Alors Ānanda pénétra dans le vihāra du Buddha et salua le Buddha. Il n'avait pas encore relevé la tête que, dans le ciel (*antarīkṣa*), une voix lui dit: Réunis vite l'assemblée!

Entendant cette voix, Ānanda eut une grande joie, sonna la cloche et réunit l'assemblée. Le son de la cloche se répandit dans le pays de Śrāvastī et atteignit la sphère du Sommet de l'existence (*bhavāgra*). Śakra, Brahmā, les quatre grands rois Lokapāla et d'innombrables Devaputra, avec des fleurs et des parfums célestes, se rendirent au Jetavana.

Alors le Bienheureux sortit de concentration et sourit (*smitam akarot*). Un éclat de cinq couleurs sortit de la bouche du Buddha et, au même moment, le vihāra du Jetavana se transforma en béryl (*vaiḍūrya*).

Alors Mañjuśrī dharmakumāra entra dans le vihāra du Buddha pour saluer ce dernier. Sur chacun de ses genoux apparurent cinq lotus. Et quand il joignit les doigts et les paumes, de ses dix doigts et de ses paumes jaillirent dix mille lotus couleur d'or. Il les lança sur le Buddha, et ils se transformèrent en un grand parasol (*mahācchattra*), fait des sept joyaux (*saptaratnamaya*) et décoré de drapeaux et de bannières (*dhvajapatākā*). Les innombrables Buddha et Bodhisattva des dix régions apparurent au centre du parasol et, après avoir tourné trois fois autour du Buddha (*buddhaṃ triḥpradakṣiṇīkṛtya*), ils se tinrent de côté.

Alors Bhadrapāla s'étant levé de son siège (*utthāyāsanāt*), rejetant sur une épaule son vêtement supérieur (*ekāṃsam uttarāsaṅgaṃ kṛtvā*), posant à terre le genou droit (*dakṣiṇaṃ jānumaṇḍalaṃ pṛthivyāṃ pratiṣṭhāpya*), tenant les mains jointes par respect vers le Buddha (*yena bhagavāṃs tenāñjaliṃ praṇamya*), s'adressa à ce dernier: Bienheureux, ce Mañjuśrī dharmakumāra a déja servi des centaines de milliers de Buddha, et le voici ici, dans le Sahā lokadhātu, qui fait œuvre de Buddha et manifeste dans les dix régions sa puissance miraculeuse (*prātihāryaiśvarya*). Au bout de combien de Kalpa entrera-t-il en Parinirvāṇa?

Le Buddha dit à Bhadrapāla: Ce Mañjuśrī a une grande bienveillance (*maitrī*) et une grande compassion (*karuṇā*). Il a pris naissance en ce pays, au village d'Uttara, dans la maison du brâhmane Brahmadatta. Au moment de sa naissance, sa chambre se transforma en lotus. Il sortit du flanc droit de sa mère. Son corps avait la couleur de l'or violet. Dès

qu'il mit pied à terre, il put parler. Il était pareil à un prince royal (*kumāra*). Un parasol fait des sept joyaux protégeait sa tête. Il se rendit chez les ermites (*ṛṣi*) en quête d'une règle de vie religieuse (*pravrajitadharma*), mais ni les quatrevingt-quinze sortes de brâhmanes, ni les maîtres d'enseignement (*upadeśācārya*) ne pouvaient lui donner la réplique. C'est seulement auprès de moi, qu'il sortit du monde et exerça le chemin. Il réside dans la concentration de la Marche héroique (*śūraṃgamasamādhi*) et, par la force de cette concentration, il manifeste au choix, dans les dix régions, naissance (*jāti*), sortie du monde (*abhiniṣkramaṇa*), Nirvāṇa, Parinirvāṇa ou partage de ses reliques (*śarīrānupradāna*): tout cela pour le bien des êtres. Ce saint homme demeure longtemps dans la Marche héroïque.

Quatre cent cinquante ans après le Nirvāṇa du Buddha, il se rendra sur le Mont Himavat où il prêchera à cinq cents ermiṭes (*ṛṣi*) et proclamera les Sūtra de douze espèces (*dvādaśāṅgasūtra*). Il convertira et fera „mûrir" ces cinq cents ermites et les fera devenir des Bodhisattva sans recul (*avaivartika*).

Avec ces saints ermites, il fabriquera une statue de bhikṣu et, volant à travers les airs, il reviendra au pays natal: Là, dans un marais sauvage, assis sous un banian (*nyagrodha*), les jambes croisées (*paryaṅkam ābhujya*), il entre dans la concentration de la Marche héroïque, et, par la force de cette concentration, tous les pores de sa peau (*romakūpa*) émettent un éclat couleur d'or. Cet éclat va illuminer, dans les univers des dix régions, les êtres susceptibles d'être convertis (*vaineyasattva*). Les cinq cents ermites voient, chacun, du feu sortir des pores de leur peau.

A ce moment, le corps de Mañjuśrī est pareil à la montagne d'or violet; sa taille est de six brasses (*vyāma*); il est orné d'un éclat circulaire (*prabhāmaṇḍala*), égal de tout côté. A l'intérieur de cette auréole, se trouvent cinq cents Buddha fictifs (*nirmita*) entourés chacun de cinq Bodhisattva fictifs. La coiffe (*cūḍā*) de Mañju est ornée du pendentif (*śakrābhilagnaratna*). Il a cinq cents couleurs variées. Dans chacune de ces couleurs, apparaissent le soleil (*sūrya*), la lune (*candra*), les étoiles (*tāraka*), les palais des Deva et des Nāga et toutes les merveilles (*adbhuta*) du monde. Entre ses sourcils (*bhruvor madhye*), il y a une touffe de poils (*ūrṇā*), blanche (*śveiā*) et tournée vers la droite (*pradakṣiṇāvartā*). Apparaissent des Buddha fictifs qui entrent dans le filet des lumières. Tout leur corps brille et les flammes (*jvāla*) se succèdent. Dans chacune de ces flammes, il y a cinq pierres précieuses (*maṇi*); chacune de ces pierres précieuses a des feux divers et des couleurs multiples. Dans ces couleurs apparaissent des Buddha et des Bodhisattva fictifs, impossibles à décrire. Dans la main gauche ils tiennent le bol aux aumônes (*pātra*); de la main droite ils dressent le livre du Grand Véhicule (*mahāyānapustaka*).

Quand Mañjuśrī a manifesté toutes ces marques, les lumières et les feux s'éteignent. Reste la statue de béryl. Sur son bras gauche se trouvent dix sceaux de Buddha (*buddhamudrā*); sur chacun de ces sceaux, il y a dix images de Buddha dont les noms apparaissent distinctement. Sur son bras droit se trouvent sept sceaux de Buddha; sur chacun de ces sceaux, it y a sept images de Buddha dont les noms apparaissent distinctement, Dans le corps, à l'endroit du cœur, il y a une statue d'or pur, en position assise les jambres croisées; elle est haute de six pieds et repose sur un lotus; elle est visible des quatre côtés.

Le Buddha dit à Bhadrapāla: Ce Mañjuśrī possède d'immenses pénétrations (*abhijñā*) et un immense pouvoir de transformation, échappant à toute description.

Maintenant je m'adresse en bref aux aveugles des générations futures. Tout être qui entend seulement prononcer le nom de Mañjuśrī retranchera des misères de la transmigration douze centaines de milliers de Kalpa; quiconque le salue et le vénère renaîtra, d'existence en existence, dans la famille des Buddha, et sera protégé par la puissance de Mañjuśrī, Ainsi donc, pour ceux qui pensent attentivement à la statue de Mañjuśrī, à sa Loi et à la statue de béryl, il en sera comme il a été dit plus haut: un à un ils le regarderont et tous obtiendront l'intelligence.

Ceux qui ne peuvent pas le voir doivent réciter le Sūtra de la Marche héroïque (*śūraṃgamasūtra*) et prononcer le nom de Mañjuśrī: dans l'intervalle de un à sept jours, Mañjuśrī viendra à eux et, s'ils sont entravés par leurs actes antérieurs (*pūrvakarman*), c'est en songe (*svapna*) qu'ils le verront.

Si ceux qui le voient en songe sont actuellement des Śrāvaka, par cette seule vision, ils deviendront Srotaāpanna, Sakṛdāgāmin ou Anāgāmin. S'ils sont des religieux (*pravrajita*) et qu'ils voient Mañjuśrī, dès qu'ils l'auront vu, ils deviendront Arhat en l'espace d'un jour et d'une nuit.

Pour [les adeptes du Mahāyāna] qui croient fermement aux Vaipulyasūtra, c'est en *dhyāna* que le dharmakumāra Mañjuśrī leur exposera les dharma profonds (*gambhīradharma*) ou, s'ils sont trop distraits (*vikṣiptacitta*), c'est en songe qu'il leur expliquera le sens vrai (*bhūtārtha*) de façon à les confirmer. Ainsi, dans le chemin suprême (*anuttaramārga*) du Mahāyāna, ils seront des Bodhisattva sans recul (*avaivartika*).

Pour ceux qui accumulent les actes méritoires (*puṇyakarman*) en pensant à lui ou en le vénérant, Mañjuśrī dharmakumāra transformera son propre corps et, se faisant pauvre (*daridra*), orphelin (*anātha*) et misérable (*duḥkhita*), il se présentera devant eux. En effet ceux qui pensent à Mañjuśrī exercent la pensée de bienveillance (*maitrīcitta*) et, exerçant cette pensée de bien-veillance, ils peuvent voir Mañjuśrī. C'est

pourquoi les sages doivent contempler en vérité les trente-deux marques (*lakṣaṇa*) et les quatre-vingts sous-marques (*anuvyañjana*) de Mañjuśrī. Ceux qui pratiquent cette contemplation arriveront rapidement, par la puissance de la Marche héroïque, à voir Mañjuśrī. Ceux qui font cette contemplation sont les vrais contemplatifs; les autres sont de faux contemplatifs.

Après le Nirvāṇa de Buddha, tous les êtres qui entendront prononcer le nom de Mañjuśrī et qui verront son effigie échapperont, durant cent mille Kalpa, aux mauvaises destinées (*durgati*). Ceux qui retiendront et réciteront le nom de Mañjuśrī, quelles que soient leurs fautes, ne tomberont pas dans les feux cruels de l'enfer Avīci, mais renaîtront toujours dans les terres pures des sphères étrangères; ils rencontreront les Buddha, entendront la Loi et obtiendront la conviction relative aux dharma dépourvus de naissance (*anutpattikadharmakṣānti*).

Quand le Buddha eut dit ces mots, cinq cents bhikṣu furent libérés de leurs impuretés (*kṣīṇāsrava*) et devinrent Arhat; d'innombrables Dẹva produisirent la pensée de l'illumination (*bodhicitta*) et formèrent le vœu (*praṇidhāna*) de toujours suivre Mañjuśrī.

Alors Bhadrapāla dit au Buddha: Bienheureux, qui donc élévera sur les reliques (*śarīra*) de Mañju un stūpa fait des sept joyaux?

Le Buddha répondit: Sur le Mont Gandhamādana, il y a huit grandes divinités: elles prendront Mañjuśrī et le déposeront sur le sommet de diamant (*vajrakūṭa*) du Gandhamādana. D'innombrables Deva, Nāga et Yakṣa viendront toujours l'honorer. Quand la grande assemblée se réunira, la statue lancera toujours son éclat, et cet éclat prêchera les dharma douloureux (*duḥkha*), vides (*śūnya*), transitories (*anitya*) et impersonnels (*anātman*). O Bhadrapāla, ce dharmakumāra possède un corps indestructible (*akṣaya-kāya*). Ce que je t'ai dit aujourd'hui, retiens-le bien et proclame-le largement à tous les êtres.

Quand le Buddha eut dit ces paroles, Bhadrapāla et les autres grands Bodhisattva, Śāriputra et les autres grands Śrāvaka, les Deva, les Nāga et l'octuple assemblée louèrent grandement les paroles du Buddha et, après l'avoir salué, se retirèrent.

### *2. La Conversion des Nirgrantha de Vaiśālī*

Dans les nombreux Sūtra où il intervient, Mañjuśrī se perd en d'interminables considérations sur la vacuité universelle et l'inexistence des êtres et des choses. On n'en accueille qu'avec plus d'intérêt le récit d'un épisode qui semble pris sur le vif et où Mañjuśrī donne la mesure de son habileté en moyens salvifiques (*upāyakauśalya*). Il s'agit de la conversion de Satyakaniṛgranthaputra, le maître jaina bien connu[76]. Par sa vivacité et son originalité, l'épisode tranche sur la banalité et le caractère stéréotypé des récits de conversion contenus dans les anciennes écritures canoniques.

L'événement, qui se passe à Vaiśālī, est relaté dans le *Ratnakāraṇḍa* dont nous possédons une première traduction chinoise exécutée par Dharmarakṣa en 270 (T 461, k. 2, p. 461 *c*-462 c), une deuxième traduction chinoise due à Guṇabhadra entre 436 et 468 (T 462, k. 2, p. 475 *c*–476 *b*) et une version tibétaine exécutée par Ratna-rakṣita (OKC 785, p. 303 *b*–305 *b*).

Voici une traduction partielle de cet épisode selon le T 462, à l'endroit indiqué ci-dessus:

> Le Révérend Pūrṇa Maitrāyaṇīputra dit à Śāriputra: Moi aussi, autrefois, j'ai été le témoin d'un miracle (*ṛddhiprātihārya*) de Mañjuśrī kumārabhūta. Un jour, le Buddha se trouvait à Vaiśālī, dans l'Āmrapālīvana, avec une grande troupe de 500 bhikṣu. En ce temps-là, Satyaka Nirgranthīputra était dans la grande ville de Vaiśālī, entouré (*satkṛta*) et vénéré (*pūjita*) par 60.000 disciples. Étant entré en concentration (*samādhi*), j'examinai ces Nirgrantha et je vis que 100.000 d'entre eux devaient être convertis. Je me rendis auprès d'eux et leur prêchai la Loi, mais personne ne voulut m'entendre et nul ne conçut de bonne pensée (*ājñācitta*). Ils détournaient les yeux, se moquaient de moi et m'adressaient des injures. Ayant peiné durant trois mois, je n'avais encore converti personne. Au bout de trois mois, complètement découragé (*nirvinna*), je les laissai et m'en allai.
>
> Alors Mañjuśrī créa par métamorphose 500 tīrthika, se fit leur maître (*ācārya*) et, à la tête de ces 500 disciples, se rendit auprès de Satyaka Nirgranthīputra. S'étant prosterné à ses pieds, il lui dit: Nous avons entendu l'éloge fait de Votre Excellence et, de loin, nous sommes venus ici, à Vaiśālī. Vous serez notre maître (*śāstṛ*) et nous serons vos éléves (*śiṣya*). Nous suivrons vos instructions (*anuśāsana*). Mais faites en sorte que nous ne rencontrions point le śramane Gautama, mais aussi que nous n'enṭendions point de discours qui lui soient contraires (*pratikūla*).
>
> Satyaka répondit: Bien, bienl Vous êtes des croyants (*śrāddha*) et, avant longtemps, vous comprendrez ma discipline (*vinaya*).
>
> Alors Satyaka donna à ses propres disciples les ordres suivants: A partir d'aujourd'hui, vous vous mêlerez à ces 500 jeunes gens (*mānavaka*) et vous converserez avec eux. Recevez attentivement tout ce qu'ils vous diront.
>
> Mañjuśrī et ses 500 disciples suivirent les leçons qui leur étaient données et adoptèrent les règles (*śikṣā*) des Nirgrantha. Et même, par leurs attitudes (*īryāpatha*), ils se montraient supérieurs à ces derniers. Constamment, ils faisaient l'éloge (*varṇana*) du Triple Joyau (*triratna*), mais constamment aussi ils louaient les qualités de Satyaka, gagnant ainsi la confiance de tous.
>
> Un autre jour, alors que l'assemblée était réunie, Mañjuśrī prit la parole: Nous avons, dit-il, des Āgama, des Mantra, des Veda et des

Tantra et, quand nous les récitons, les vertus (*guṇa*) du śramane Gautama pénètrent en nous, car on y trouve les vraies vertus (*bhūtaguṇa*) du śramane Gautama. Comment cela? Le śramane Gautama est de haute naissance par son père et sa mère ... [Suit une homélie sur la vie de Buddha et sa doctrine].

Au milieu de l'assemblée des tīrthika, Mañjuśrī expliqua graduellement (*anupūrveṇa*) la Bonne loi de telle manière que 500 tīrthika obtinrent, sur les dharma, le pur œil de la Loi, sans poussière et sans tache (*virajo vigatama-laṃ dharmeṣu dharmacakṣur viśuddham*) et que 8.000 autres tīrthika produisirent la pensée de la suprême et parfaite illumination (*anuttarāyāṃ samyaksaṃbodhau cittāny utpāditāni*).

Alors les 500 disciples qui avaient été créés (*nirmita*) par Mañjuśrī se prosternèrent à terre en présence de ce dernier et s'écrièrent: „Hommage au Buddhal Hommage au Buddha!" (*namo buddhāya*). Quand les autres tīrthika qui n'avaient pas encore la foi virent ces 500 jeunes gens (*mānavaka*) pousser ce cri, ils les imitèrent et, se prosternant à terre, ils crièrent, eux aussi: *Namo buddhāya, namo buddhāya*!

### *3. Mañjuśrī et les Vaipulyasūtra*

On croit généralement que les premiers Vaipulyasūtra furent publiés vers le début de notre ère, donc cinq siècles après le Nirvāṇa de Śākyamuni. Cependant les théoriciens du Mahāyāna les donnèrent comme authentique Parole du Buddha et, pour appuyer cette prétention, inventèrent quantité de légendes concernant la prédication, la compilation, la préservation, la publication et enfin la diffusion des Mahāyānasūtra.

Ayant déjà traité ce sujet ailleurs[77], je me bornerai ici à souligner le rôle joué par Mañjuśrī dans la compilation et la préservation des textes.

Tandis que cinq cents Arhat sthaviriens, aussitôt après le Nirvāṇa de Śākyamuni, se réunissaient à Rājagṛha, sous la présidence de Mahākāśyapa, pour entendre de la bouche d'Ānanda et d'Upāli la récitation de la loi (*dharma*) et de la discipline (*vinaya*), une multitude de Bodhisattva vint s'établir sur le mont mythique du Vimalasvabhāva, au sud de Rājagṛha, pour y compiler les Mahāyānasūtra; le concile fut présidé par Samantabhadra; Mañjuśrī répéta l'Abhidharma; Maitreya, le Vinaya, et Vajrapāṇi les Sūtra. Certains pensent qu'Ānanda, se dédoublant lui-même, participa à ces assises et aida ou suppléa Vajrapāṇi dans la récitation des Sūtra du Grand Véhicule.

Cette fable apparaît dans le *Mahāprajñāpāramitopadeśa* traduit et annoté par Kumārajīva, de 402 à 404. Elle fut reprise et développée par l'auteur du *Tarkajvāla*, l'exégète Haribhadra (IXe siècle), et les historiens tibétains Bu-ston (1323) et Tāranātha (1608)[78].

Selon une croyance commune à l'Inde et la Chine, les Mahāyānasūtra prêchés par le Buddha et compilés par les grands Bodhisattva, étaient de dimensions considérables et dépassaient pour la plupart 100.000 *gāthā* (unités de 32

syllabes). C'est ce qui leur valut le nom de *Vaipulyasūtra* „Sūtra développés". Dans une note annexée à sa traduction de l'*Upadeśa*, Kumārajīva remarque:

> Le Buddha n'a pas parlé au cours d'une unique existence. Durant d'innombrables générations, il s'est créé par métamorphose un nombre incalculable de corps, et c'est pourquoi ce qu'il a dit est immense: ainsi, il y eut un *Acintyavimokṣasūtra* (= Avataṃsaka) en 100.000 *gāthā*. Le *Buddhajātakasūtra*, le *Ratnameghasūtra*, le *Mahāmeghasūtra* et le *Dharmameghasūtra* comptaient chacun 100.000 *gāthā*. Le *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra*, le *Kuśala-mūlasaṃgrahasūtra*, le *Mahākaruṇāsūtra*, l'*Upāyasūtra*, le *Nāgarājapari-pṛcchāsūtra*, l'*Asūrarājaparipṛcchāsūtra* et d'autres grands Sūtra étaient immenses et infinis comme les joyaux dans la grande mer. Comment pourraient-ils entrer dans le Tripiṭaka? C'est le plus petit qui peut entrer dans le plus grand; le plus grand n'entre pàs dans le plus petit[79].

Cependant, comme chacun sait, les Mahāyānasūtra ne se répandirent en Inde que cinq ou six siècles après le Nirvāṇa de Śākyamuni. Où donc étaient-ils restés dans l'intervalle? L'explication traditionnelle est résumée par Fa-tsang (643–712) de la façon que voici:

> Selon le *Mañjuśrīparinirvāṇasūtra* (T 463, p. 480 *c* 20–21), quatre cent cinquante ans après que le Buddha eut quitté ce monde, Mañjuśrī restait seul au monde. Selon le *Prajñāpāramitopadeśa* (T 1509, k. 100, p. 756 *b* 15), beaucoup de Mahāyānasūtra furent compilés par Mañjuśrī, et notamment ce Sūtra [de l'*Avataṃsaka*] fut compilé par Mañjuśrī. Mais, après le départ du Buddha, les saints se cachèrent et les hérétiques se disputèrent l'hégémonie. Comme on manquait de récipients pour contenir ces Sūtra du Grand Véhicule, ils demeurèrent dans le palais du Roi des Nāga de la mer et, durant plus de six siècles, ils ne circulèrent pas dans le monde. Le bodhisattva Nāgārjuna entra dans le palais des Nāga et, un jour qu'il visitait ce palais profond, il apprit par cœur ces Sūtra. Quand il en ressortit, il les publia, et c'est ainsi que ces Sūtra se répandirent[80].

C'est en effet vers les débuts de notre ère que la *Prajñāpāramitā* et quantité de Mahāyānasūtra furent mis en circulation:

> Quand le Buddha était en ce monde, il pouvait trancher les doutes de la Communauté; la loi bouddhique était prospère et on ne craignait pas sa disparition. Mais, après le Nirvāṇa du Buddha, *passé cinq cents ans*, la Bonne loi disparaît peu à peu et, dès lors, l'œuvre du Buddha est menacée. C'est alors que les êtres de facultés vives (*tīkṣṇendriya*) étudieront et méditeront la Prajñāpāramitā; ils lui offriront des fleurs et

> des parfums. Les êtres de facultés faibles (*mṛdvindriya*) la transcriront et lui offriront aussi des fleurs et des parfums ... La Prajñāpāramitā se répandra au loin dans la région du Nord[81].

Nāgārjuna, le fondateur de l'école Madhyamaka, qui vécut, croit-on, au IIe siècle de notre ère, contribua beaucoup à cette diffusion. Mais sa biographie n'est qu'un tissu de légendes[82]. Personne ne mit en doute sa fameuse visite au palais des Nāga. La *Vie du bodhisattva Nāgārjuna* attribuée à tort à Kumārajīva rapporte que le Roi des Nāga prit Nāgārjuna en pitié et lui permit d'entrer dans la mer. Dans son palais, il ouvrit devant lui sept réceptacles (*piṭaka*) précieux; de toutes parts, il prit des Ṣūtra et des préceptes abstrus, ainsi que de nombreux Dharma merveilleux, et les remit à Nāgārjuna. Ce dernier les récita en 90 jours et en comprit la plus grande partie[83]. Le séjour de Nāgārjuna est encore signalé par d'autres sources indiennes, chinoises et tibétaines[84].

Aux premiers siècles de notre ère, on découvrait des Mahāyānasūtra un peu partout. Sadāprarudita trouva la *Prajñā* au Gandhāra, dans la ville de Gandhāvatī, au centre d'une tour où le bodhisattva Dharmodgata l'avait déposée: elle était écrite sur des feuilles d'or avec du béryl fondu; scellée de sept sceaux, elle était enfermée dans une cassette précieuse reposant sur une litière faite des sept joyaux[85]. Mañjuśrī lui-même, déguisé en bhikṣu, déposa dans la demeure de Candragupta, roi d'Oḍiviṣa (Orissa) un manuscrit de *l'Aṣṭasāhasrikā* ou un Tantra[86]. Nāgārjuna rapporta à Nālandā un exemplaire de la *Śatasāhasrikā* et de la *Svalpākṣarā*[87]. Notons cependant que les bouddhistes sthaviriens et sarvāstivādins qui tenaient les Mahāyānasūtra pour apocryphes refusèrent de s'en laisser conter et qu'à leurs yeux la *Śatasāhasrikā*, par exemple, n'était qu'un faux composé par Nāgārjuna[88].

Selon le cours normal des choses, la littérature où s'exprime une civilisation grandit et s'amplifie au fur et à mesure que cette civilisation se développe. Dans le monde bouddhique, ce fut exactement l'inverse, compte tenu de l'omniscience des Buddha et de la décadence progressive des facultés humaines. C'est une croyance générale dans le bouddhisme du Petit comme du Grand Véhicule qu'il y a eu „perte de la révélation primitive" (*mūlasaṃgītịbhraṃśa*) et que nous ne possédons plus qu'une minime partie des Sūtra prêchés par le Buddha[89]. Dans ceux que nous lisons, le Buddha affirme sans cesse qu'il lui faudrait un Kalpa, plus d'un Kalpa, etc., pour exposer au long la *Prajñāpāramitā*[90], l'*Acintyavimokṣa* (= *Avataṃsaka*)[91], le *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*[92], etc.

Tels qu'ils avaient été prêchés par les Buddha, compilés par les Bodhisattva et gardés dans le palais des Nāga, les Vaipulyasūtra comptaient un minimum de 100.000 *gāthā*. Lorsque Nāgārjuna et ses émules les publièrent, ils durent en faire des résumés pour les adapter aux „facultés faibles" de leurs auditeurs. Pour les Indiens, la chose était sans grande importance car, avec les procédés mnémotechniques dont ils disposaient, il leur était aisé de transformer une recension longue en une recension courte et vice versa. Pour les Chinois qui n'avaient point les mêmes facilités, le fait était plus grave. Ils se désolaient de ne disposer

que des textes condensés et fragmentaires, et aspiraient à retrouver cette fameuse recension en 100.000 *gāthā* qui, à leurs yeux, était la recension primitive[93].

Au IIIe siècle, à Lo-yang, on croyait sur la foi des anciens maîtres, „qu'après le Nirvāṇa du Buddha, un éminent savant étranger (外國高士) avait condensé la Prajñāpāramitā en 90 sections (= la *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā*) en une *Tao-hing-p'in* 道行品 (= *Aṣṭasāhasrikā*)"[94] et que ces deux recensions „la longue comme la courte, dérivaient toutes deux d'une recension de base *Pen-p'in* 本品 en 600.000 mots (où E. Zürcher croit reconnaître la *Śatasāhasrikā*)"[95].

Tchou Che-hing 朱士行 qui ne connaissait la Prajñāpāramitā que par la médiocre version de l'*Aṣṭasāhasrikā* due à Lokakṣema (T 225), entreprit, en 260, un long et pénible voyage dans les pays de l'Ouest, à la „recherche de la Loi" 求法, Arrivé au Khotan, il eut la bonne fortune d'y trouver le texte sanskrit de la *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā*[96].

Cette trouvaille, bientôt suivie d'autres semblabes, ne fit que confirmer les Chinois dans leur respect à l'endroit des recensions longues qu'ils tenaient pour originales et authentiques. Dans les classements et reclassements auxquels ils soumirent la Prajñāpāramitā, ils donnent toujours la recension longue comme la plus ancienne, la recension moyenne comme d'âge intermédiaire et la recension courte comme la plus recente[97]. On verra plus loin qu'ils agirent de même pour les autres textes et notamment pour l'*Avataṃsaka*.

### 4. *Mañjuśrī et les Nāga du Dékhan*

Dans le *Gaṇḍavyūha*, l'une des rares sections de l'*Avataṃsaka* dont l'original sanskrit nous soit parvenu, Mañjusrī dirige par ses conseils les pérégrinations indiennes du jeune Sudhana, parti à la recherche de la parfaite illumination. Selon ce Sūtra, Mañjuśrī lui-même se rendit au Dékhan dans la grande ville de Dhanyākara (éd. D. T. Suzuki, p. 50. l. 17: *dakṣiṇāpathe dhanyākaraṃ nāma nagaram*). Les versions chinoises rendent le nom de cette ville par les caractères: *Kio tch'eng* 覺城 (T 278, k. 45, p. 687 *c* 9), *Fou tch'eng* 福 | (T 279, k. 62, p. 331 *c* 26) ou *Fou-cheng tch'eng* 福生 | (T 293, k.4, p. 677 *a* II). Parmi les nombreuses cités indiennes citées dans le *Gaṇḍavyūha*, c'est à peu près la seule qui se laisse identifier: il s'agit de Dhānyakaṭaka, en tibétain *Ḥbras spuṅs*, capitale du pays Andhra. Elle est fréquemment mentionnée dans les inscriptions bouddhiques en brāhmī[98]; selon les sources tibétaines elle servit de résidence à Nāgārjuna[99]; et Hiuan-tsang lui consacre une intéressante notice[100].

A Dhanyākara, Mañjuśrī s'était établi au caitya du Vicitra-sāradhvajavyūha „Développement de la bannière à essence multiple" et y avait prêché le sūtra du *Dharmadhātunayaprabhāsa* „Lumiere sur le principe de Telement de la Loi". Des millions de Nāga, sortis de l'océan, s'étaient joints aux habitants de la ville pour venir l'entendre. Touchés par sa prédication, ils avaient échangé leur destinée de serpent contre celles des dieux et des hommes, et plusieurs milliers d'entre eux étaient devenus des Bodhisattva *avaivartika*, assurés de progresser sans recul vers la suprême et parfaite illumination[101].

Dans le *Lotus de la Bonne Loi*, Mañjuśrī, sorti du milieu de l'océan, sur un lotus à cent feuilles, large comme la roue d'un char, déclare au bodhisattva Prajñākūṭa qu'il a discipliné, au fond des mers, des créatures en nombre immense et incommensurable. Un prodige vint confirmer ses dires. Plusieurs milliers de lotus, sortis de l'océan, s'élancèrent dans les airs; et sur ces lotus parurent assis plusieurs milliers de Bodhisattva qui se dirigèrent par la voie de l'atmosphère jusqu'au Gṛdhrakūṭaparvata de Rājagṛha où ils restèrent suspendus dans le ciel. C'étaient tous ceux que Mañjuśrī avait disciplinés pour l'état suprême de Buddha[102].

La fille de Sāgara, roi des Nāga, agée de huit ans, avait, elle aussi, entendu Mañjuśrī proclamer le *Lotus de la Bonne Loi*. A la vue de tous les mondes, elle supprima en elle les signes de son sexe et se montra revêtue des organes masculins. Transformée en Bodhisattva, elle se dirigea vers le sud et gagna l'univers Vimalā. Là, assis près du tronc d'un arbre Bodhi, ce Bodhisattva se montra parvenu à l'état de Buddha parfaitement accompli, portant les trente-deux signes caractéristiques d'un grand homme[103].

Il y aurait à épiloguer sur les liens unissant le détenteur de la science sacrée, hantant les hautes montagnes, et cet animal prophétique qu'est le serpent.

### *5. Les manifestations individuelles de Mañjuśrī*

Dans l'étude bourrée de faits et de références qu'il a consacrée à *Maitreya l'inspirateur*[104], M. Demiéville a montré combien les rapports étaient faciles et fréquents entre les sphères où résident les Bodhisattva et le monde des hommes. Maitreya descend du ciel des Tuṣita pour venir réciter en Inde le *Sūtra des dix-sept terres*. Ses dévots peuvent, de leur vivant même, monter auprès de Maitreya pour recevoir ses enseignements ou ses inspirations: ils usent de leur pouvoir magique (*ṛddhyabhijñā*) pour se rendre eux-mêmes au ciel des Tuṣita. Plus simplement encore et, sans se déplacer corporellement, ils entrent en communication avec Maitreya au cours d'un transport spirituel, en méditation (*samādhi*) ou en rêve (*svapna*).

Mañjuśrī, lui aussi, se manifeste à ses disciples et, plus spécialement, aux Mādhyamika qui défendent sur terre les idées qui lui sont chères: la vacuité (*śūnyatā*), l'absence de caractère particulier (*ānimitta*), la non prise en considération (*apraṇihita*) des êtres et des choses. S'il est relativement facile aux disciples de Maitreya de gagner le ciel des Tuṣita qui fait partie de notre monde, les sphères cosmiques lointaines où réside Mañjuśrī sont pratiquement inaccessibles au commun des mortels. Seuls de grands Bodhisattva pourraient s'y rendre par leur propre force magique. Aussi est-ce en rêve que Mañjuśrī apparaît généralement. Tāranātha a dressé la liste des docteurs auxquels il fut donné de „voir le visage de Mañjuśrī". Ce furent Mātṛceta (p. 95), Dignāga (p. 131), Buddhapālita (p. 135), Candragomin (p. 153), Śāntideva (p. 163), Lalitavajra (p. 189), Asvabhāva (p. 199), Līlāvajra (p. 215), Buddhaguhya (p. 223), Prajñākaramati (p. 235), Prajñārakṣita (p. 245) et Bodhibhadra (p. 259).

Il ne s'agit pas là d'inventions tardives, car Hiuan-tsang signale lui aussi une apparition de ce genre[105]. Le logicien Dignāga était sur le point de bifurquer vers le Petit Véhicule et de prendre le Nirvāṇa des Arhat lorsque Mañjuśrī se montra à lui. Il lui rappela son vœu antérieur de se consacrer au bien de toutes les créatures et l'invita à propager la *Yogācārabhūmi*, traité de l'école d'Asaṅga écrit sous l'inspiration de Maitreya. Dignāga renonça donc à suivre la carrière des Arhat et se consacra à l'étude de la logique. Après avoir publié son grand traité du *Pramāṇasamuccaya*, il propagea de toute manière le système du Yoga.

## VII. Mañjuśrī au Khotan et au Népal

Dans le *Mañjuśrīpariṇirvāṇasūtra* analysé et traduit ci-dessus (VI, § I), le Buddha annonçait que, 450 ans après son Nirvāṇa, Mañjuśrī se rendrait au *Siue chan* „Mont des neiges" et y convertirait cinq cents ermites. La mention du *Hiang chan* „Mont des parfums" (Gandhamādana) qui fait suite immédiatement montre que, dans l'esprit du rédacteur indien, le Mont des neiges en question n'est autre que l'Himavat ou l'Himālaya.

Mais, dans l'idée des Chinois, la dénomination de Siue chan est beaucoup plus élastique. Pour ne citer qu'un exemple, „le Siue chan est aussi le nom de diverses montagnes situées dans l'Ouest de la Chine, et en particulier, des monts Richthofen dont les neiges éternelles s'élèvent aux confins du Kan-sou et du Ts'ing-hai, au Sud-Ouest de la route conduisant vers Touen-houang entre Leangtcheou et Sou-tcheou, et qui sont identifiées sous le nom de K'i-lien dans certains commentaires des T'ang"[106].

Ceci explique que, commentant ce passage du *Mañjuśrīparinirvāṇasūtra*, le chinois Tao-che 道世, qui travailla à Tch'ang-ngan de 656 à 668, identifie le Siue chan aux Ts'ong-ling 葱嶺 „Monts des Oignons" sur le plateau des Pamirs. Il en conclut que les cinq cents „Immortels" convertis par Mañjuśrī étaient des Sérindiens, vivant à l'est des Pamirs[107].

Quoi qu'il en soit de cette interprétation, Mañjuśrī, à partir du VIIe siècle de notre ère, entra dans le cycle des légendes bouddhiques relatives à l'Asie Centrale et en particulier au Khotan[108].

### *1. Mañjuśrī au Khotan*

F. W. Thomas, dans ses *Tibetaṇ Literary Texts and Documents concerning Chinese Turkestan*, I, Londres, 1935, a traduit toute une série de textes tibétains concernant le Khotan (en tibétain, Li-yul) où Mañjuśrī intervient épisodiquement. Les principaux sont: 1. La prophétie de Gośṛṅga (OKC 1026) probablement traduite du sanskrit; 2. La prophétie de l'arhat Saṃghavardhana (Tanjour, Mdo XCIV, 44); 3. Le *Liḥi yul gyi luṅ bstan pa* ou Prophétie concernant le Khotan; 4. Le *Li yul gyi lo rgyus* ou Annales du Khotan; 5. L'enquête de Vimalaprabha (OKC 835).

Ces textes ne sont pas antérieurs au VIIe siècle ap. J.-C. (cf. Thomas, *l.c.*, p.

9, 42–43, 163–164); le troisième, *Prophétie concernant le Khotan*, fut traduit en chinois par Fa-tch'eng (T 2090) aux environs de l'an 800 (cf. P. Demiéville, *Le Concile*, p. 189).

Selon ces prophéties, le Buddha se trouvait à Vaiśālī au milieu d'une grande assemblée de Śrāvaka, de Pratyekabuddha, de dieux et de demi-dieux, parmi lesquels on notait la présence de Pañcaśikha, le roi des Gandharva. Accompagné de toute sa suite, il se rendit dans la région du nord, sur les bords de la rivière Goma, près du mont Gośṛṅga (actuellement Kōhmārī). Ce mont était habité par de grands ermites, et il s'y trouvait également le stūpa du buddha Kāśyapa, stūpa connu sous le nom de *Go-ma-sa-la-gan-da*. Mais, à cette époque, toute la région était recouverte d'un grand lac. Aussi est-ce du haut des airs que le Buddha bénit le Mont Gośṛṅga, le stūpa Go-ma-sa-la-gan-da et, avec eux, toute la région du Dge ba, c'est-à-dire du Khotan (Thomas, l.c., p. 12–13; 89–91). A leur tour les huit grands Bodhisattva qui veillaient sur le stūpa de Kāśyapa bénirent la montagne en formulant le vœu d'y avoir un jour leurs statues et leurs monastères. Le désir de Mañjuśrī était de voir s'élever sur le Mont Gośṛṅga un monastère du nom de *Par-spoṅ-byed* (Id., p. 15).

Au préalable, il fallait assécher la région. Sur l'ordre du Buddha, les disciples Śāriputra et Vaiśravaṇa gagnèrent à travers les airs la montagne de *Śa* (variante, *Samaṅsaraṇa*). Śāriputra, avec son bâton de mendiant, Vaiśravaṇa avec son épée, mirent à sec une moitié de la montagne et la transportèrent sur le versant occidental du site, provoquant ainsi l'écoulement d'un grand fleuve. Quant au lac et à tous les êtres vivants qui l'habitaient, ils les transférèrent au milieu du *Śo-rtsaṅ-po*, littéralement, de la rivière *Śo* (Id., p. 35, 95). Ce faisant, ils mirent à jour le stūpa Go-ma-sa-la-gan-da, le Mont Gośṛṅga et le pays du Khotan.

Tous les termes géographiques dont il est question ici ont déjà été étudiés (bibliographie dans Thomas, *o.c.*, p. 1–10), mais il n'est peut-être pas inutile de préciser ici les quelques points suivants:

Le *Mahāsaṃnipāta* (T 397, k. 45, p. 294 *c* 3–4) mentionne déjà, au *Yu-t'ien* 于闐 (Khotan), le *Nieou-kio-fong-chan* 牛角峯山 (*Gośṛṅgaparvata* „Montagne de la corne du bœuf") où se trouvait le *Kiu-mo-so-lo-kan-t'o meou-ni ta-tche-t'i* 瞿摩娑羅乾陀牟尼大支提 (*Gomasalagandhamunimahācaitya* „Le grand temple du sage Gomasala").

Dans leur liste des lieux habités par les anciens Bodhisattva (*pūrvabodhisattvādhyāsitasthāna*), les deux versions chinoises et la version tibétaine de l'*Avataṃsaka* (T 278, k. 29, p. 590 *a* 28–29; T 279, k. 45, p. 241 *c* 18; OKC 761, n° 38, p. 276 *b* 6–7) signalent le Gośīrṣaparvataṭ (*Nieou-t'eou-chan* 牛頭山; *Ba laṅ gi mgo bo* „Mont de la tête du bœuf")[100] qu'elles situent respectivement au *Pien-yi-kouo* 邊夷國 „Royaume des barbares des frontières", au pays de *Chou-lö* 疏勒 „Kashgar", et au *Yul Kha-śan* „Pays de Khaśa"[110].

Passant par le Khotan à son retour des Indes vers 644, Hiuantsang (T 2087, k. 12, p. 943 *c* 14–18) signale, à plus de vingt lis au sud-ouest de la capitale, le Mont *K'iu-che-tsiun* (lire: *leng*)-*k'ie* 瞿室餕(䬇)伽 en chinois *Nieou-kio* 牛角 (Gośṛṅga). Il rappelle que le Buddha visita cette montagne et y prédit les futurs

succès du Mahāyāna en ce royaume. Le mont Gośṛṅga, précise-t-il, était une montagne à double sommet avec des pics escarpés de tous côtés.

Avec sa montagne, ses pics et son lac, l'endroit offrait à Mañjuśrī une résidence idéale, en tout point semblable à celle du Gandhamādana dans l'Himālaya. Et l'on peut se demander si ce Vaiśravaṇa qui l'aménagea d'un coup d'épée n'était pas un *nirmāṇa* de Mañjuśrī.

## *2. Mañjuśrī au Népal*

Autrefois, Khotan se disait en tibétain Li-yul. Mais après la disparition du Khotan comme royaume indépendant, il y eut chez les auteurs tibétains quelque flottement sur la localisation du Li-yul. Certains identifient le Li-yul à la Mongolie, d'autres à une province du Tibet, d'autres enfin au Népal (Pal-yul). C'est ce qui explique qu'à une date tardive un grand nombre de légendes khotanaises aient été transplantées au Népal. Le sujet a été traité par le professeur J. Brough dans un court mais substantiel article, *Legends of Khotan and Nepal* (BSOAS, XII, 1948, p. 333–339), dont je traduis ici un extrait:

„Au Népal, les principaux recueils de légendes locales sont le *Svayambhūpurāṇa*[111] et la *Vaṃśāvalī* bouddhique[112]. Cette dernière, compilée au début du XIXe siècle, s'appuie largement sur le premier pour la période légendaire, mais apparamment utilise aussi d'autres sources. Au témoignage du *Svayambhūpurāṇa*[113], Mañjudeva arriva, de la montagne de Mañjuśrī en Chine[114], à la vallée du Népal qui était originellement un lac, le Kālīhrada (Nāgahrada selon la *Vaṃśāvalī*). Là, il ouvrit les six vallées sur la rive sud du lac, en en drainant les eaux. Puis, du côté sud de l'une de ces vallées, la Gandhāvatī, il creusa un nouveau lac et éleva une montagne à côté de l'ancien Kālīhrada. Au sommet de cette montagne, il creusa un nouveau lac dans lequel les Nāga du Kālīhrada furent invités à prendre place[115] . . . Au Népal le principal sanctuaire du bouddhisme est la colline de Svayambhū, située à un mille et demi à l'ouest de Kāṭhmaṇḍū. Selon le *Svayambhūpurāṇa*[116], le nom de cette colline était Padmagiri durant le Satya-yuga, à cause de ses cinq lotus faits de joyaux. Durant le Tretāyuga, la colline fut appelée Vajrakūṭa; durant le Dvāparayuga, Gośṛṅga; enfin, durant le Kaliyuga, Gopuccha[117]. Près du Svayambhūcaitya (selon Wright, sur le pic occidental de la colline de Svayambhū) est située la rėṣidence népalaise de Mañjuśrī, le Mañjuśrīcaitya"[118].

A travers ces contaminations brâhmaniques, le lecteur aura reconnu la légende du Mont Gośṛṅga au Khotan, elle-même tributaire des traditions indiennes relatives au Gandhamādana himâlayen. Mais le cycle népalais de Mañjuśrī est de date récente. Le Bodhisattva ne figure pas dans les inscriptions népalaises[119], et il n'en est pas question au cours du moyen âge indien.

## VIII. Mañjuśrī en Chine

### *I. Le Wou-t'ai chan*

Bodhisattva de l'Inde et de la Sérinde, Mañjuśrī est encore le grand Bodhisattva de Haute Asie. Du IVe siècle jusqu'à nos jours, il a sa résidence en Chine au Wou-t'ai chan 五臺山 „Mont des cinq terrasses", où sa présence attira durant des siècles des foules de pèlerins. Cette montagne ou plutôt cette chaîne de montagnes, d'une altitude de 3.040 mètres, est située au nord-ouest de la sous-préfecture de Wou-t'ai et au nord-est de celle de Fan-tche, dans l'actuel Chan-si.

Au cours de sa longue histoire, la montagne fut encore connue sous d'autres noms. Un auteur du VIIe siècle relève les appellations *Ts'ing-leang chan* 清涼 „Mont frais", *Wou-fong chan* 五峯 „Mont aux cinq cimes", et *Tseu-fou chan* 紫府 „Mont du palais pourpre"[120].

On trouvera ailleurs l'histoire de cet important lieu saint sur laquelle M. Demiéville a réuni une copieuse bibliographie[121]. Dans le sujet qui nous occupe on se bornera à utiliser trois monographies chinoises:[122]

A. Une notice contenue dans T 2073, k. I, p. 156 *c*–157 *b*: *Houa yen king tchouan ki* 華嚴經傳記 „Notes sur la tradition de l'*Avataṃsakasūtra*" par Fa-tsang 法藏. Fa-tsang, né en 643 d'une famille d'origine sogdienne établie à Tch'ang-ngan, fut le disciple de Tche-yen 智儼 et lui succéda comme troisième patriarche de la secte Houa-yen. Il résida au Ta-yuan sseu 太原寺 de Tch'ang-ngan dès 670. Il travailla avec Śikṣānanda à partir de 695, puis avec Yi-tsing. Il mourut en 712, au Ta-ts'ien-fou sseu 大薦福寺 de Tch'ang-ngan.

B. T 2098: *Kou ts'ing leang tchouan* 古清涼傳 „Traditions anciennes sur le Ts'ing-leang" par Houei-siang 慧祥, moine chinois de Lan-kou 藍谷, qui visita le Wou-t'ai en 667.

C. T 2099: *Kouang ts'ing leang tchouan* 廣清涼傳 „Traditions développées sur le Ts'ing-leang" par Yen-yi 延一, chinois qui résida au Wou-t'ai et publia l'ouvrage en 1060.

Voici la traduction de la première notice:

> A propos d'un traité (*śāstra*) en six cents rouleaux sur l'*Avataṃsaka*. — Autrefois, au début de l'ère Ta-houo 大和 des Pei Ts'i 北齊[123], le troisième prince, qui cherchait le bodhisattva Mañjuśrī sur le Ts'ing-leang chan, brûla son corps en offrande[124].
>
> Ce prince avait un eunuque nommé Lieou K'ien-tche 劉謙之. Celui-ci, qui regrettait sa défience physique et avait assisté à la scène du prince qui se brûla lui-même, sollicita de l'empereur la permission d'entrer dans la montagne [du Ts'ing-leang] pour y cultiver le Chemin. Un décret l'y autorisa. Alors il y apporta le Sūtra [de l'*Avataṃsaka*] et y consacra jour et nuit tous ses efforts. Il confessa ses fautes, récita le Sūtra, sollicita des grâces de choix et, dans l'espoir d'un secours mystérieux, s'abstint de manger des céréales et ne but que de l'eau. Au bout

de trois semaines, sa complexion physique s'affaiblit, mais il redoubla de zèle. Subitement, il sentit tous ses cheveux repousser et il recouvra ses organes masculins. Son esprit s'éclaira et il pénétra les mystères. Il étendit ses réflexions et approfondit ses recherches, et c'est alors qu'il composa, d'un bout à l'autre, le susdit traité [en six cents rouleaux sur l'*Avataṃsaka*]. Il retourna pour rendre compte à l'empereur, et Kao-tsou 高祖 attacha foi à son histoire. Dès lors, ce fut un progrès constant, et le Sūtra de l'*Avataṃsaka* connut un plein succès[125].

Sous la dynastie des Souei 隋, le maître de la Loi Houei-yuan 慧遠 du Tsing-ying sseu 淨影寺 avait dans sa vieillesse composé un commentaire (*chou* 疏) sur ce Sūtra [de l'*Avataṃsaka*][126]. Quand il arriva au chapitre de l'Application [des mérites][127], il éprouva subitement mal au cœur. Il examina sa poitrine et il vit à l'endroit du cœur un pore qui laissait couler du sang. En outre il rêva qu'une faux en main, il gravissait une haute montagne en la fauchant au fur à mesure, mais qu'arrivé à mi-chemin ses forces défaillaient et qu'il ne pouvait plus tenir debout. S'étant réveillé, il dit à ses disciples: „Ce rêve signifie que mon commentaire ne pourra pas être terminé". Dès lors, il interrompit son travail.

Le maître de la loi Hieou 休, de Siang tcheou 相州, entendit l'*Avataṃsaka* plus de cinquante fois. Il en scruta attentivement le texte et la teneur. Mais plus il s'efforçait, plus il s'enfonçait dans le noir. Alors il se dit à lui-même: „Ceci est la parole définitive du grand saint [Mañjuśri]; comment pourrait-elle être comprise par l'humble profane que je suis?".

Considérons le vaste savoir de ces deux sages [Houei-yuan et Hieou]. Leur grandeur et leurs ressources étaient choses rares, mais ils ont traîné en chemin et n'ont pas pu comprendre l'*Avataṃsaka* jusqu'au bout. Au contraire [l'eunuque] Lieou K'ien-tche n'a même pas mis quelques dizaines de jours à écrire son immense traité [en six cents rouleaux sur l'*Avataṃsaka*]. Quel exploit! Mais c'est le grand saint [Mañjuśrī] qui l'a aidé: il n'y a donc là rien de fort étonnant[128]

Dans l'*Avataṃsaka*, au chapitre des Résidences des Bodhisattva, il est dit: „Au nord-est il y a une résidence de Bodhisattva appelée Ts'ing-leang chan 清涼山, Mont Frais. Actuellement, il y a un Bodhisattva nommé Mañjuśrī qui, avec une myriade de Bodhisattva, s'y trouve toujours et prêche la Loi"[129]. C'est pourquoi aujourd'hui, au pied de cette montagne, il y a la préfecture de Ts'ing-leang, et sur un petit pic au flanc sud de la montagne, le monastère de Ts'ing-leang[130].

Un autre nom est Wou-t'ai chan 五臺山, „Mont aux cinq terrasses". Parce que ces cinq montagnes sont très élevées, les arbres ne poussent pas au sommet. Parce que leur configuration ressemble à de la terre amassée, on parle de „terrasses". Le pourtour de la montagne dépasse quatre cents lis. A l'est, elle est reliée au mont Heng, 恒岳[131].

Sur la terrasse centrale, il y a le Ta-houa-tch'e 大華池 „Étang aux grandes fleurs"[132]. Il est clair et limpide, et les vapeurs qui s'en élèvent ont beaucoup d'efficacité. Il y a aussi de belles maisons et des stūpa de pierre.

Sur la terrasse du nord il y a deux Stūpa de fer 鐵浮圖 contenant tous deux des reliques[133]. Il y a aussi une statue de Mañju. Au sud-est de la terrasse centrale, à plus de trente lis en contre-bas, il y a le Ta-feou sseu 大浮寺 fondé par l'empereur Ming 明 des Han[134]. Étant fort ancien, il tombe de plus en plus en ruines, mais les traces des fondations peuvent encore être reconnues. Au centre, il y a deux salles, l'orientale et l'occidentale, dont l'aménagement de statues subsiste encore[135]. Devant, il y a un jardin de fleurs, de deux à trois centaines d'arpents[136]. Tissu de fleurs entrecroisées et de toutes espèces, il resplendit comme de la soie fine et brille comme les feux de brumes ensoleillées. Il y a là des espèces extraordinaires et inouïes, de véritables raretés. Au quinzième jour de la septième lune, ces myriades de fleurs s'épanouissent à la fois.

Ensuite, à huit ou neuf lis au nord, là où autrefois le prince avait sacrifié sa vie, se trouve actuellement un stūpa commémoratif.

Autrefois, au temps des Pei Ts'i 北齊, le taoïsme ayant subi une grande proscription, on éleva sur cette montagne plus de deux cents *saṃghārāma* bouddhniques et l'on opéra des prélèvements sur les taxes de huit préfectures, Heng-ting 北齊 et autres, pour assurer aux communautés de la montagne des ressources en vêtements et médicaments[137].

Aujourd'hui, le Saint [Mañjuśrī] habite cette terre précieuse et il s'y trouve constamment car, selon diverses traditions, le bodhisattva Mañjuśrī prêche toujours l'*Avataṃsakasūtra* en cet endroit. C'est pourquoi, depuis l'antiquité[138] jusqu'au rène des T'ang, souvent des moines bouddhistes des Pays d'Occident, sans reculer devant les myriades de lis [qu'ils ont à parcourir], se rendent en ces sommets pour visiter [Mañjuśrī]; et de ce pays même (la Chine), religieux et laïcs s'y suivent en cortèges soulevant la poussière des ornières. Tantôt on y rencontre des foules de saints moines, ou des pavillons d'Immortels et des terrasses précieuses. Il y brille une lumière spirituelle et des parfums merveilleux embaument l'atmosphère. Dans l'air, des cloches résonnent automatiquement; des stances précieuses se font entendre de loin. Soudain et subitement s'y manifestent mille transformations miraculeuses, ainsi que le rapporte la „Notice sur le mont Ts'ing-leang".

La montagne se trouve à la limite de la préfecture de Tai 代州, à 1.600 lis de la capitale [Tch'ang-ngan][139]. Mais l'endroit se trouve aux frontières; le froid y est particulièrement rigoureux. C'est pourquoi, avant la quatrième lune et après la septième, la glace est prise et la neige s'accumule; une blancheur éclatante remplit tout. Sauf en plein été, il est impossible de gravir la montagne. Debout, sages qui avez embrassé le chemin! Se pourrait-il que vous n'y alliez pas tous une fois?

De la notice de Houei-siang, il suffira d'extraire le passage suivant (*B*, 1093 *a* 9–13):

> La troisième année *yong-kia* 永嘉 des Tsin 晋 (309)[140], dans l'ancienne commanderie de Yen-men 雁門郡, plus de cent familles de la sous-préfecture de Souo-jen (à prononcer *Souo-jen* ou *Soua-jen*), fuyant des troubles, se retirèrent sur cette montagne. Quand elles virent les montagnards, elles s'arrêtèrent et ne retournèrent pas chez elles, mais s'établirent en ces lieux escarpés et sauvages. Parfois des gens de passage observaient de loin leurs habitations, mais quand ils y allaient pour leur faire visite, nul ne savait plus où ils étaient. C'est pourquoi on considéra cette montagne comme une capitale dẹs Immortels. Un *Livre des Immortels* dit: „Le Mont aux cinq terrasses est appelé le Palais pourpre; il s'en dégage souvent des vapeurs pourpres. Des Immortels y habitent".

Les quelques renseignements réunis ici permettent de dégager les grandes lignes de l'histoire du Wou-t'ai chan. La montagne fut un centre taoïste et un séjour d'Immortels jusqu' au début du IVe siècle (309). Au cours du IVe siècle, les bouddhistes se l'annexèrent et y situèrent le bodhisattva Mañjuśrī. La montagne avec ses cinq pics, son lac et ses Immortels était, comme le Gandhamādana en Inde et le Gośṛṅga au Khotan, un lieu saint tout indiqué pour Mañjuśrī et ses cinq cents ṛṣi. A une date que nous essayerons de déterminer, les traducteurs chinois de l'*Avataṃsaka* introduisirent dans le texte original un passage donnant le Ts'ing-leang chan (autre nom du Wou-t'ai chan) comme une ancienne résidence de Mañjuśrī. Dans la seconde moitié du Ve siècle, en 471 ou 477, l'empereur Hiao-wen Hong des Pei Wei érigea sur la montagne le monastère du Ta Feou-t'ou Ling-tsieou qui fut sans doute le premier monument bouddhique de l'endroit. Vers la même date, un „troisième prince" y brûla son corps par „dévouement" à Mañjuśrī.

Le culte du grand Bodhisattva était déjà très florissant au début du VIe siècle[141]. Sous les Pei Ts'i (550–577), plus de deux cents *saṃghārāma* furent construits au Wou-t'ai, et un prélèvement sur les taxes des habitants des districts voisins fut affecté à l'entretien des moines.

Mais c'est sous les T'ang (618–907) que le culte de Mañjuśrī atteignit sou apogée en Chine. Les laborieux patriarches de la secte Houa-yen, Tche-yen (602–668), Fa-tsang (643–712), Tch'engkouan (737–820 ou 838), ainsi que Li T'ong-hiuan, qui firent de la montagne leur terre sainte, contribuèrent grandement à son succès. Le Wou-t'ai chan commença à être fréquenté par des bouddhistes de toute la Chine et par des pèlerins étrangers, indiens, japonais et tibétains. Le pèlerinage s'organisa: des plans et des notices furent mis à la disposition des visiteurs[142].

### *2. La falsification de l'Avataṃsaka*

On a vu le rôle important joué par l'*Avataṃsaka* et la secte Houa-yen dans les traditions relatives au Wou-t'ai. Il convient d'esquisser ici l'histoire de l'*Avataṃsaka* en Chine et de relever les manipulations auxquelles il fut soumis en ce qui concerne la montagne sainte.

*Premières traductions partielles de* l'*Avataṃsaka.* — Nous ignorons tout de la genèse de l'*Avataṃsaka* sanskrit dont quelques parties seulement, — le *Dharmadhātupraveśa*, le *Gaṇḍavyūha* et le *Daśabhūmika* —, nous sont parvenues dans l'original. S'agissait-il d'une œuvre homogène, ou d'une collection de textes disparates artificiellement groupés, comme ce fut le cas, semble-t-il, pour le *Ratnakūṭa*? Les Chinois ne se sont pas posé la question. Pour eux, l'*Avataṃsaka* fut prêché par le Buddha, collationné par Mañjuśrī et conservé durant six siècles dans le palais des Nāga. Au cours de sa visite en ce palais, Nāgārjuna put apprendre par cœur la fameuse recension longue en 100.000 *gāthā*, mais au cours de ses prédications il dut la réduire considérablement à cause de l'imbécillité de ses auditeurs.

Jusqu'au Ve siècle, l'*Avataṃsaka* pénétra en Chine par bribes et morceaux, à travers les traductions partielles exécutées aux IIe et IIIe siècles par Lokakṣema à Lo-yang (T 280), Tche K'ien à Nankin (T. 281) et surtout Dharmarakṣa à Tch'ang-ngan (T 283, 285, 288, 291, 292). Parue en 297, la traduction du *Daśabhūmika* par Dharmarakṣa fit grande impression. Un exemplaire, fâcheusement amputé du premier rouleau, parvint même à Siang-yang 襄陽, au Hou-pei, dans la célèbre bibliothèque de Tao-ngan 道安 qui y séjourna de 365 à 379. Tao-ngan tenait cet exemplaire pour une rareté, louait la traduction de Dharmarakṣa et déplorait qu'elle fût si peu connue en Chine[143].

*Découverte et traduction de la recension en* 36.000 *gāthā.* — La découverte de la première recension complète de l'*Avataṃsaka* fut le fait de Tche Fa-ling 支法領 sur lequel les renseignements sont fragmentaires et contradictories.

Il convient d'abord d'éliminer les données fournies par le *Fa yuan tchou lin*[144], compilé en 668. Selon cette source, après le règn e de l'empereur Houan (147–168) des Heou Han, cinq religieux d'Occident, originaires d'un royaume de l'Inde du Nord, vinrent en Chine. C'étaient Tche Fa-ling, Tche K'ien, Tchou Fa-hou (Dharmarakṣa), Tchou Tao-cheng et Tche Leou-tch'an. Fa-ling récita de vive voix un chapitre du *Prātimokṣa* et des *Karmavācanā*, et serait à ce titre l'introducteur de l'ordination religieuse en Chine. S. Lévi, É. Chavannes et P. Pelliot ont dénoncé l'incohérence de cette information qui réunit en une même ambassade cinq personnages de date et de provenance différentes[145].

Selon le *Kao seng tchouan* publié par Houei-kiao entre 519 et 544, et le *Tch'ou san tsang ki tsi* publié par Seng-yeou en 515, Fa-ling fut le disciple de Houei-yuan 慧遠 (334–416), moine chinois influent qui fonda, en 402, au mont Lou 廬山 (le Kou-ling moderne dans le Kiang-si) l'Association du Lotus Blanc et exerça une sorte de patriarcat sur tout le bouddhisme chinois[146].

> Primitivement, beaucoup de Sūtra en usage à l'est du fleuve [Yang-tseu] étaient incomplets; les règles du *dhyāna* n'étaient pas connues et le Vinayapiṭaka était défectueux. Déplorant ces déficiences de la doctrine, Houei-yuan envoya ses disciples Fa-tsing 法淨, Fa-ling, etc., chercher au loin les Sūtra. Ils franchirent les sables et les neiges et, après bien des années, ils firent retour. Tous avaient trouvé des textes sanskrits qui, alors, purent être traduits[147].

Les deux mêmes sources, mais à un autre endroit, précisent que: „Le śramane Tche Fa-ling, arrivé au Yu-t'ien 于闐 (Khotan), obtint les 36.000 *gāthā* de la partie antérieure de l'*Avataṃsaka*. Mais il n'y avait pas de traduction"[148].

Un document contemporain, la préface à la traduction du *Vinaya des Dharmaguptaka* exécutée eu 410, fournit des dates et des précisions sur la mission de Fa-ling:

> En l'année *jen-tch'en* 壬辰 (392), il y eut le śramane Tche Fa-ling du pays des Tsin[149]. Constant la perversion des pays-frontières et déplorant le peu de diffusion de la discipline correcte, il fit le sacrifice de sa vie et s'exposa aux dangers afin de répandre la religion parmi ceux qui l'ignoraient. A l'ouest, il franchit les Sables mouvants en direction des Indes lointaines. Passant par le Khotan, il y rencontra la secte des Dharmaguptaka et un trepiṭakin du Mahāyāna, le śramane Buddhayaśas. C'était un homme de talent, au vaste savoir, qui comprenait et pratiquait les Sūtra, le Vinaya ainsi que le Tripiṭaka. Ensemble ils recitèrent et étudièrent les textes. Puis, au Khotan, ils réunirent une masse de Sūtra dans leur vihāra. Après quoi, ils firent retour et, en l'année *wou-chen* 戊申 (408), arrivèrent au pays des Ts'in. Yao 姚, le souverain des Ts'in[150], rempli d'admiration pour les profonds mystères et les beautés cachées [du bouddhisme], déclara que la grande Loi est profonde, que pour sauver les êtres il faut des *sīla* et que ceux-ci, étant propagés par une foule de saints, ne peuvent avoir de défauts. Alors, cette même année, Yao invita à deux reprises [Buddhayaśas] à traduire le Vinayapiṭaka[151].

Pour condensée qu'elle soit, cette notice tient assez bien et correspond à ce que nous savons par ailleurs. Dès le IIIe siècle, le Khotan constituait une réserve de Mahāyānasūtra. Comme on l'a vu plus haut[152], Tchou Che-hing y trouva, en 260, un manuscrit indien de la *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā*, texte qui fut traduit à Tch'ang-ngan, en 291, par le Khotanais Mokṣala (T 221). En 296, un autre Khotanais, Gītamitra, arrivait à Tch'ang-ngan avec un nouveau manuscrit du même texte[153]. Enfin Fa-hien, qui séjourna trois mois au Khotan, en 401, fut frappé par l'essor du Mahāyāna en ce petit royaume, entouré de régions restées jusqu'alors d'obédience sarvāstivādin[154].

Le religieux kāśmīrien Buddhayaśas, alors qu'il tenait école a Cha-lö 沙勒

(Kashgar), instruisit Kumārajīva (344–409) dans le Grand Véhicule et l'initia à la scolastique mādhyamika. Plus tard, apprenant que Kumārajīva se trouvait à Kou-tsang 姑臧 (près de Leang-tcheou dans le Kan-sou), il gagna cette dernière ville, vers l'année 401. Mais Kumārajīva venait d'être enlevé par une armée chinoise et installé de force à Tch'ang-ngan par le souverain barbare Yao Hing. Averti de l'arrivée de Buddhayaśas à Kou-tsang, Kumārajīva pria Yao Hing de l'inviter à Tch'ang-ngan, mais l'empereur refusa. Mais quand Yao Hing demanda à Kumārajīva de traduire des textes bouddhiques, celui-ci insista de nouveau pour que Yaśas fût appelé, car, disait-il, il était plus capable que lui de remplir cette tâche. Yao Hing envoya alors quelques émissaires avec des présents pour prier Yaśas de venir à Tch'ang-ngan. Yaśas refusa les présents et fit savoir à l'empereur que, s'il ne devait pas être mieux traité que Kumārajīva, il n'accepterait pas l'invitation. Frappé par cette fière réponse, l'empereur envoya une nouvelle invitation et de belles promesses. Yaśas arriva à Tch'ang-ngan en 408 et se mit aussitôt au travail. Aidé de Tchou Fo-nien, il publia, dés 410, une traduction du *Vinaya des Dharmaguptaka* (T 1428) et, en 413, une traduction du *Dīrghāgama* (T 1).[155].

Tout ceci peut se concilier avec ce qui a été dit précédemment. Cependant les maîtres chinois de l'*Avataṃsaka*, au VIIIe siècle, ont éssayé d'étoffer et de corser la biographie de Fa-ling.

1. Dans son *Houa yen king tchouan ki* (T 2073), Fa-tsang (643–712), le troisième patriarche de la secte Houa-yen, donne de nouveaux détails sur la découverte, par Fa-ling, de la recension en 36.000 *gāthā*:

> Le *K'ai houang san pao lou* 開皇三寶錄 dit qu'autrefois, „à plus de 2.000 lis an sud-est du Khotan, il y avait le pays de Tchö-kiu-kia 遮拘迦[156]. Ses rois, de génération en génération, vénéraient le Mahāyāna. Les moines illustres de tous les pays qui venaient en ce territoire étaient tous mis à l'épreuve. S'ils étaient hînayânistes, le roi les chassait et ne les gardait pas; s'ils étaient mahâyânistes, il les invitait à s'arrêter et les entretenait. Dans le palais du roi se trouvaient les Sütra de l'*Avataṃsaka*, de la *Mahāprajñā [-pāramitā] et du Mahāsaṃnipāta*: chacun comptait dix myriades de *gāthā*. Le roi lui-même en assurait la garde et détenait personnellement la clé de la porte; lors des lectures, il l'ouvrait et faisait des offrandes de fleurs parfumées. En outre, dans la chapelle, il faisait disposer toutes sortes d'ornements: collections de joyaux, fleurs suspendues, fruits de saison et hors de saison. Il induisait ses vassaux à venir y faire leurs dévotions. En outre, au sud-est de ce pays, à plus de 20 lis, il y avait une montagne très escarpée où l'on avait déposé l'*Avataṃsaka*, le *Mahāsaṃnipāta*, le *Vaipulya* (?), le *Ratnakūṭa*, le *Laṅkāvatāra*, le *Vaipulya* (?), la *Sāriputradhāraṇī*, la *Puṣpakūṭadhāraṇī*, le *Tou-sa-lo-tsang* 都薩羅藏 (Tuṣārapiṭaka?)[157], la *Mahāprajñā[pāramitā*], [l'octuple *Prajñā(pāramitā)*] et le *Mahāmegha*: en tout douze ouvrages ayant chacun dix myriades de

> *gāthā*. D'après les lois du royaume il est de tradition de les protéger et de les garder." Il y eut, sous la dynastie des Tong Tṣin, le śramane Tche Fa-ling. Tempérament magnanime, il prit secrétement une résolution excellente. Il aimait le Mahāyāna à en oublier le dormir et le manger. Muni d'un sac de vivres et armè d'un bâton, il se rendit là [à Tchö-kiu-p'an], au péril de sa vie, pour y chercher [des textes] et il trouva les 36.000 *gāthā* formant la partie antérieure de l'*Avataṃsaka*, qu'il rapporta ici. Ce sont elles qui furent traduites sons la dynastie des Tsin[158].

Ici Fa-tsang, pour étoffer la mince biographie de Fa-ling, y a introduit des renseignements plus ou moins légendaires concernant le royaume de Karghalik. Il les emprunte au *K'ai houang san pao lou*, c'est-à-dire au *Li tai san pao ki* (T 2034, k. 12, p. 103 *a* 10–24) publié en 597 (17e année de l'ère *K'ai-houang*), et dont l'auteur se réfère lui-même à des informations données oralement par le traducteur Jinagupta, son contemporain.

Ce fut en effet dans la seconde moitié du VIe siècle, donc un siècle et demi après Fa-ling, que les Chinois apprirent l'existence à Karghalik d'une riche et volumineuse collection de Mahāyānasūtra. Ce renseignement leur fut communiqué par l'Indien Jinagupta (528–605)[159], un kṣatriya originaire de Puruṣapura (Peshawer), au Gandhāra. A l'âge de vingt-sept ans, il entreprit, avec dix compagnons, un long et périlleux voyage en Asie Centrale à travers le Kapiśa, l'Himālya, le royaume des Huns Hephthalites, Tash Kurgan, le Khotan, la région du Koukou-nor, le Kan-sou pour arriver enfin à Tch'angngan dans la période *wou-tch'eng* 武成 (559–560) de l'empereur Ming 明 des Pei Tcheou. Les textes ne disent pas qu'il soit passé par Karghalik, mais c'est lui qui décrivit aux Chinois les richesses de la bibliothèque du roi de Tchö-kiu-kia et de la montagne voisine[160]. Il faut lui laisser la responsabilité de cette découverte et ne pas l'attribuer à Fa-ling.

2. Au témoignage des sources anciennes examinées plus haut, Fa-ling rencontra Buddhayaśas au Khotan en 392 et rentra avec lui à Tch'ang-ngan, via Kou-tsang, en 408. Houei-ying 惠英, disciple de Fa-tsang, et qui vécut durant la première moitié du VIIIe siècle, substitue Buddhabhadra à Buddhayaśas: ce serait donc Buddhabhadra que Fa-ling aurait rencontré au Khotan et ce serait avec Buddhabhadra qu'il aurait regagné la Chine.

Dans son *Ta fang kouang to houa yen king kan ying tchouan* „Relation des exaucements de l'*Avataṃsakasūtra*", texte remanié en 783 (T 2074), Houei-ying écrit:

> Sous les Tong Tsin (317–420), le śramane Tche Fa-ling avait quitté la maison dans sa jeunesse. Animé d'une résolution pure, et déplorant les changements subis par la Bonne Loi après le Nirvāṇa du Buddha, il alla dans les pays d'Occident pour y chercher des textes sacrés. Arrivé au Khotan, il y rencontra, venu d'Occident, un trepiṭaka, maître de la Loi en Véhicule unique (*ekayāna*), nommé Buddhabhadra, en chinois

> Kio-hien 覺賢. Il appartenait au clan des Śākya et descendait du roi Amṛtodana. Il possédait le troisième fruit du Mahāyāna correspondant à la troisième terre des Bodhisattva. Il était arrivé [au Khotan] avec un texte sanskrit de l'*Avataṃsaka*, texte comportant plus de 36.000 *gāthā*. Quand il y avait des choses qu' il ne comprenait pas dans ce Sūtra, il montait au ciel des Tuṣita et interrogeait le bhagavat Maitreya. Fa-ling supplia ce trepiṭaka de descendre en Chine pour y répandre l'*Avataṃsaka*. Cédant à son invitation, Buddhabhadra arriva à la capitale [Tch'ang-ngan] et s'y fixa. Mais ses manières ne ressemblaient pas à celles du vulgaire: il sortait et entrait librement par les baies des fenêtres. Tous les moines de son entourage étaient effrayés et le prenaient pour Māra. La communauté interrogea donc le trepiṭaka et lui demanda: Maître de la Loi, possédez-vous les qualités surhumaines? — Le trepiṭaka leur répondit: Je les ai d'ores et déjà obtenues. Les supérieurs réunirent la communauté religieuse de la capitale et, au cours d'une procédure ecclésiastique (*dharmakarman*), décidèrent son expulsion. Le trepiṭaka prenant son vêtement et son bol aux aumônes, monta dans les airs, manifesta les airs, manifesta les transformations et, assis et volant, il arriva au Sud, à Yang-tcheou 楊洲, comme un oiseau volant dans les airs. Tous les moines furent stupéfaits et confus, mais ne purent le rattraper[161].

Cette histoire ne résiste pas à l'examen. Ce n'est pas avec Fa-ling, mais avec Tche-yen 智嚴 que Buddhabhadra gagna la Chine. Il s'y rendit en passant par le Tonkin et n'arriva à Tch'ang-ngan que vers 410.

Moine chinois originaire du Kan-sou, Tche-yen quitta Tchang-yi 張掖 (Kan-tcheou au Kan-sou) au mois d'août 400 et, en compagnie de Fa-hien, gagna Karashar (Arśi)[162]. De là il dut retourner à Kao-tch'ang 高昌 (Tourfan) pour s'y réapprovisionner avant de reprendre la route. Il arriva au Kaśmīr vers 401 et, avec Buddhabhadra qui s'y trouvait déjà, il suivit les leçons du maître en yoga Buddhasena[163]. Il y resta au moins trois ans. En 404, il repartit pour la Chine enmenant avec lui Buddhabhadra, pour l'aider à traduire la *Yogācārabhūmi* de Buddhasena et d'autres textes sanskrits. Les deux compagnons passèrent par les Ts'ong-ling 葱嶺 (Monts des Oignons, dans les Pamirs) et les Six Royaumes (六國) pour aboutir au Tonkin (Kiao-tche 交趾, en annamite Giao-chi)[164]. De là ils s'embarquèrent pour la Chine. Il y a désaccord sur la date exacte de leur arrivée à Tch'ang-ngan[165]: ce fut, semblet-il, vers 410[166]. A Tch'ang-ngan, Buddhabhadra excita la jalousie des disciples chinois de Kumārajīva. Aussi accepta-t-il l'invitation de Houei-yuan à se rendre dans la Chine du Sud. Vers 412, au mont Lou, dans le Kiang-si, il traduisit la *Yogācārabhūmi* de Buddhasena. Puis il gagna Nankin où, de 413 jusqu'à sa mort survenue en 429, il traduisit encore une foule de textes sanskrits et notamment la recension de l'*Avataṃsaka* en 36.000 *gāthā* trouvée par Fa-ling.

Ainsi donc, si Houei-ying, dans son T 2074, s'écarte délibérément des

sources anciennes pour faire de Fa-ling le compagnon de voyage de Buddhabhadra (et non plus de Buddhayaśas), c'est uniquement pour le plaisir d'associer, dans de mêmes aventures, le dépisteur et le traducteur de la première recension complète de l'*Avataṃsaka*.

En ce qui concerne la traduction, les renseignements sont précis et unanimes:

> Autrefois, le religieux Tche Fa-ling trouva au Khotan la recension en 36.000 *gāthā* de l'*Avataṃsaka*. Le dixième jour de la troisième lune de la quatorzième année *yi-hi* 義熙 des Tsin (30 avril 418), à Yang-tcheou 楊州, au Tao-tch'ang sseu 道場寺 fondé par le ministre des travaux Sie Che 謝石, on invita le maître indien en dhyāna Buddhabhadra. Tenant en mains le texte sanskrit, il traduisit le sanskrit en chinois des Tsin. Le śramane Che Fa-ye 釋法業 reçut personnellement la traduction au pinceau. Le gouverneur de la commanderie de Wou 吳, Mong K'ai 孟顗, et le général de la garde de droite, Tch'ou Chou-tou 褚叔度, furent alors les bienfaiteurs en titre[167]. La traduction fut terminée le dixième jour de la sixième lune de la deuxième année *yuan-hi* 元熙 (6 juillet 420). On collationna en tout à deux reprises le texte sanskrit, et le collationnement fut terminé le vingt-huitième jour de la douzième lune de la deuxième année *yong-tch'ou* 永初 des grands Song (16 avril 421)[168].

Cette traduction comptait 60 rouleaux et 34 chapitres. A son propos, on lit encore:

> Plus de cent personnes, les śramanes Houei-yen 慧嚴[169], Houei-yi 慧義[170], etc., critiquaient et déterminaient le texte et le sens, et comparaient le chinois et le sanskrit. On obtint ainsi un texte excellent. C'est pourquoi, au Tao-tch'ang sseu, il y a encore une salle dite de l'*Avataṃsaka*[171].

Mais si la bibliographie chinoise est une science exacte, astreinte à des précisions rigoureuses, la poésie ne perd pas ses droits. Aussi voyons-nous la *Relation de exaucements de* l'*Avataṃsaka* introduire un peu de fantaisie dans ces longues et fastidieuses séances de traduction:

> A Kien-ye 建業 (Nankin), dans le monastère de Sie, le ministre des travaux, on avait construit une salle pour conserver les textes sacrés. On y traduisit l'*Avataṃsaka*. Au moment où on allait traduire ce Sūtra, devant la salle, apparut soudainement un étang. Chaque matin, deux paysans vêtus de bleu sortaient de l'étang, pénétraient dans la salle aux Sūtra, lavaient, balayaient, broyaient l'encre et faisaient le service; le soir arrivé, ils rentraient passer la nuit dans l'étang. Selon la tradition, on expliquait que l'*Avataṃsaka* était resté longtemps dans le palais des

> Nāga. C'étaient donc des rois-nāga qui, pour faire honneur aux traducteurs, venaient faire le service en personne. En suite de quoi on a changé le nom du monastère et on l'a appelé Hing-yen sseu 興嚴寺 „Monastère de l'avènement de l'*Avataṃsaka*"[172].

*Traduction de la recension en* 40.000 *gāthā.* — Cependant les Chinois n'avaient pas perdu l'espoir de se procurer un jour la fameuse recension en 100.000 *gāthā* rapportée par Nāgārjuna du pays des Nāga.

Par ailleurs, il semble que l'indien Paramārtha ait pris un malin plaisir à les confirmer dans leurs illusions. Paramārtha (500–569)[173], en chinois Tchen-ti 眞諦, était un brâhmane originaire d'Ujjayinī en Avanti. Converti au bouddhisme, il se fit missionnaire et, en 546, débarqua à Canton avec 240 *poṭhī* de manuscrits. Il gagna Nankin durant la 7e lune intercalaire de l'année 548. L'empereur Leang Wou-ti 梁武帝 (502–549) le reçut royalement, mais Paramārtha perdit bientôt son protecteur et, durant tout le reste de sa vie, erra en Chine du sud, ballotté par les événements politiques, mais traduisant force Sūtra partout où il se trouvait.

Interrogé par le Chinois sur les recensions de l'*Avataṃsaka*, voici ce qu'il leur dit:

> Les traditions en cours dans les pays d'Occident disent que le bodhisattva Nāgārjuna se rendit dans le palais des Nāga et y vit l'*Avataṃsaka Mahācintyavimokṣasūtra*. Il y avait trois recensions. La recension longue comptait des *gāthā* aussi nombreuses que les poussières contenues dans dix trichiliomégachiliocosmes (*trisāhasramahāsāhasralokadhātu*) et comportait des chapitres (*parivarta*) aussi nombreux que les poussières contenues dans un univers à quatre continents (*caturdvīpa*). La recension moyenne comptait 49 myriades et 8.800 *gāthā* et comportait 1.200 *parivarta*. La recension courte comptait 10 myriades de *gāthā* et comportait 48 *parivarta*. Deux de ces recensions, la longue et la moyenne, accessibles [seulement] à l'œil omniscient (?) et n'étant pas à la portée des profanes (*pṛthagjana*), restèrent cachées et ne circulèrent pas. La recension courte est actuellement répandue dans les Indes. Il en fut ainsi parce que les aptitudes [des auditeurs] sont dissemblables et que leur érudition diffère. Mañjuśrī et Samantabhadra, eux, reçurent l'enseignement complet de l'*Avataṃsaka* [dans sa recension longue]; Vasubandhu et Nāgārjuna en virent tout juste un succédané [:la recension courte en 10 myriades]. Quant aux petits saints, tout en étant de leur entourage, ils n'entendirent rien; ce sont les grands saints qui, par des voies extraordinaires, en eurent la connaissance anticipée. Les succès de la sainte doctrine dépendent du degré des capacités: cela est évident. En outre, parce que Buddha a quitté ce monde depuis les êtres se sont viciés: leurs forces physiques et leurs intelligences ont baissé et ils n'ont plus eu la force de retenir au complet cette recension courte [en dix myriades de *gāthā*][174].

Or voici que Jinagupta, arrivé à Tch'ang-ngan en 560, affirmait l'existence à Karghalik, tant au palais du roi que sur la montagne voisine de la capitale, de la fameuse recension en dix myriades de *gāthā*. La nouvelle fut presque aussitôt consignée dans le *Li tai san pao ki* en 597, et les *Mémoires* de Hiuan-tsang, publiées par Pien-ki en 646, semblaient la confirmer.

Tous les espoirs étaient donc permis, et les recherches reprirent. Elles aboutirent à la découverte et à la traduction d'une recension, non pas en 100.000, mais en 40.000 *gāthā* et 39 *parivarta* occupant 80 rouleaux. Ici nous avons le témoignage direct de Fa-tsang qui collabora à cette traduction:

> Śikṣānanda[175], du monastère de Fo-cheou-ki sseu 佛授記寺 dans la capitale divine (Lo-yang) des Grands Tcheou 周[176], en chinois des T'ang Hio-hi 學喜, est originaire du Khotan; son savoir est vaste et étendu et son idéal est d'être utile aux êtres. Il est versé dans le Grand et le Petit Véhicule et, aussi, dans les traités des hérétiques. L'Impératrice Céleste T'ien Heou 天后[177] répand brillamment la lumière du Buddha et vénère le Mahāyāna. Dans l'ancienne traduction de l'*Avataṃsaka*, les lieux (*tch'ou* 處, *sthāna*) et les assemblées (*houei* 會, *parṣad*) [où le Sūtra avait été prêché] n'étaient pas au complet[178]. C'est pourquoi, apprenant qu'au loin il y avait au Khotan un texte sanskrit de ce Sūtra, l'impératrice envoya des messagers pour chercher des informations et inviter un traducteur. C'est ainsi que Śikṣānanda, prenant avec lui le Sūtra, arriva au palais impérial l'année *yi-wei* 乙未, première de la période *tcheng-cheng* 證聖 de T'ien Heou (695); c'est dans la capitale orientale (Lo-yang), au monastère de Pien-k'ong sseu du Palais impérial 大內遍空寺, qu'il traduisit l'*Avataṃsakasūtra*. T'ien Heou daigna assister en personne aux séances; elle composa la préface[179] et, maniant elle-même le pinceau, elle inscrivit le titre en tête. Un Indien du sud, le śramane Bodhiruci[180], et le śramane Yi-tsing 義淨[181] récitèrent ensemble le texte sanskrit; après, le texte fut remis aux śramanes Fou-li 復禮 [182], Fa-tsang 法藏[183], etc. La traduction fut terminée au monastère de Fo-cheou-ki sseu, l'année *ki-hai* 己亥, deuxième de la période *cheng-li* 聖曆[184].

*Les trois traductions de l'Avataṃsaka*. — En résumé, nous disposons actuellement de deux traductions chinoises et d'une traduction tibétaine de l'*Avataṃsaka*:

1. T 278 *Ta fang kouang fo houa yen king*, 34 *parivarta* en 60 rouleaux. — Cette traduction fut exécutée par Buddhabhadra, à Nankin, de 418 à 420, sur une recension sanskrite en 36.000 *gāthā* découverte au Khotan par Fa-ling entre 392 et 408.

2. T 279 *Ta fang kouang fo houa yen king*, 39 *parivarta* en 80 rouleaux. — Cette traduction fut exécutée par Śikṣānanda, à Lo-yang, de 695 à 699, sur

une recension sanskrite en 40.000 *gāthā* apportée du Khotan par Śikṣānanda en 695.

3. Ōtani Kanjur Catalogue n° 761 (Ōtani ed. of the Tibetan Tripiṭaka, vol. 25–26): *Saṅs rgyas Phal po che źes bya ba Śin tu rgyas pa chen poḥi mdo*, 45 *parivarta*. Cette traduction fut exécutée, dans le premier quart du IXe siècle[185], par Jinamitra, Surendrabodhi et Ye-śes-sde.

*Le Ts'ing-leang chan et les versions chinoises.* — Comme on l'a vu au début de cette section, le Wou-t'ai chan ou Ts'ing-leang chan tire ses titres de noblesse d'un passage des versions chinoises de l'*Avataṃsaka* (T 278, k. 29, p. 590 *a* 3–5; T 279, k. 45, p. 241 *b* 20–23) où il est dit: „Dans la région du nord-est, il y a une résidence de Bodhisattva nommée Ts'ing-leang chan. Dans le passé, les Bodhisattva y habitaient toujours. Là, présentement, il y a un Bodhisattva appelé Mañjuśrī. Il a un entourage d'une myriade de Bodhisattva et toujours il prêche la Loi".

C'est à ce passage que se réfèrent sans cesse les historiens et les choniqueurs de l'*Avataṃsaka* et du Wou-t'ai.

En s'y référant, Fa-tsang (T 2073, k. 1, p. 157 *a* 8–10) cite le passage librement. Houei-siang (T 2098, k. 1, p. 1092 *c* 22–24) reproduit textuellement la traduction de Buddhabhadra (T 278, *l.c.*). Yen-yi (T 2099, k. 1, p. 1103 *b* 18–21) cite textuellement la traduction de Śikṣānanda (T 279, *l.c.*). La citation adoptée par Houei-ying (T 2074, p. 175 *b* 21–23) est beaucoup plus libre et ajoute une précision qui, en l'occurrence, n'était pas négligeable: „Au pays de Tchen-tan 震旦 (Chine), au nord-est, etc.".

Cependant, je crois pouvoir affirmer que la mention du Ts'ing-leang chan et de Mañjuśrī *dans le passage en question* est une interpolation chinoise et ne faisait pas partie de la recension originale de l'*Avataṃsaka*.

*La falsification de l'Avataṃsaka.* — La mention du Ts'ing-leang chan se trouve dans les traductions chinoises du chapitre intitulé *P'ou sa tchou tch'ou* 菩薩住處 (T 278, k. 29, p. 589 *c*–590 *b*; T 279, k. 45, p. 241 *b*–*c*). A ce chapitre correspond, dans la version tibétaine, le leḥu intitulé *Byaṅ chub sems dpaḥi gnas* (OKC 761, vol. *Li*, p. 275 *a* 8–277 *a* 3).

Comme le titre l'indique, il y est question des résidences ou des stations occupées au temps passé par des Bodhisattva (*pūrvakāle bodhisattvādhyāsitāni sthānāni*). Le chapitre comprend deux parties bien distinctes:

1. Huit résidences constituées par des montagnes mythiques situées dans les quatre régions principales (*diś*) et les quatre régions intermédiaires (*vidiś*) de notre univers à quatre continents. Pour chacune de ces résidences, le texte mentionne quatre choses:

    a. le région (*diś* ou *vidiś*),
    b. le nom de la montagne mythique,
    c. le nom du Bodhisattva principal qui l'habite,
    d. le nombre des Bodhisattva qui l'entourent.

2. Quatorze résidences situées en Inde même et pour lesquelles le texte mentionne seulement:
   a. le nom du district indien (par exemple: Mathurā),
   b. le nom de la résidence elle-même (par exemple: Saṃtoṣaṇī guhā).

Seules les huit premières résidences nous intéressent ici. En voici le texte tibétain avec une traduction française:

1. Sar phyogs logs na sṅon tshe byaṅ chub sems dpaḥ bźugs bźugs paḥi ri *Draṅ sroṅ ḥbyuṅ ba* źes bya baḥi yod de. de la byaṅ chub sems dpaḥ *Rdo rjeḥi dpal* źes bya ba byaṅ chub sems dpaḥi ḥkhor sum brgya daṅ ldan pa chos ston to.

1. Dans la région de l'est (*pūrvasyāṃ diśi*), il y a le mont Naissance des ermites (*ṛṣyutpāda*) habité autrefois par des bodhisattva. C'est là que le bodhisattva Vajraśrī, entouré de 300 bodhisattva, prêche la Loi.

2. Lho phyogs logs na sṅon byaṅ chub sems dpaḥ bźugs bźugs paḥi ri *Dpal gyi phuṅ po* źes bya ba yod de. de la byaṅ chub sems dpaḥ *Chos kyi blo gros* śes bya ba byaṅ chub sems dpaḥi ḥkhor lṅa brgya daṅ ldan pa chos ston to.

2. Dans la région du sud (*dakṣiṇasyāṃ diśi*), il y a le mont Pic de beauté (*śrīkūṭa*) habité autrefois par des bodhisattva. C'est là que le bodhisattva Dharmamati, entouré de 500 bodhisattva, prêche la Loi.

3. Nub phyogs logs na sṅon byaṅ chub sems dpaḥ bźugs bźugs paḥi ri *Rdo rjeḥi ḥod ḥphro can* źes bya ba yod de. de la byaṅ chub sems dpaḥ *Seṅ geḥi ḥgro ḥgro ba* źes bya ba byaṇ chub sems dpaḥi ḥkhor sum brgya daṅ ldan pa chos ston to.

3. Dans la région de l'ouest (*paścimāyāṃ diśi*), il y a le mont Éclat du diamant (*vajrārcis*) habité autrefois par des bodhisattva. C'est là que le bodhisattva Siṃhavikrāntagāmin, entouré de 300 bodhisattva, prêche la Loi.

4. Byaṅ phyogs logs na sṅon byaṅ chub sems dpaḥ bźugs bźugs paḥi ri *Spos kyi phuṅ po* źes bya ba yod de. de la byaṅ chub sems dpaḥ *Spos kyi glaṅ po* źes bya ba byaṅ chub sems dpaḥi ḥkhor stoṅ phrag gsum daṅ ldan pa chos ston to.

4. Dans la région du nord (*uttarasyāṃ diśi*), il y a le mont Pic des parfums (*gandhakūṭa*) habité autrefois par des bodhisattva. C'est là que le bodhisattva Gandhahastin, entouré de 3.000 bodhisattva, prêche la Loi.

5. Śar phyogs logs na sṅon byaṅ chub sems dpaḥ bźugs bźugs paḥi ri *Spaṅ ri* źes bya ba yod de. de la byaṅ chub sems dpaḥ *Ḥjam dpal* źes bya ba byaṅ chub sems dpaḥi ḥkhor stoṅ phrag bcu daṅ ldan pa chos ston to.

5. Dans la région de l'est (*pūrvasyāṃ diśi*), il y a le mont Montagne herbeuse (*śādvalaparvata*)[186] habité autrefois par des bodhisattva. C'est là que le bodhisattva Mañjuśrī, entouré de 10.000 bodhisattva, prêche la Loi.

6. Byaṅ daṅ śar gyi phyogs mtshams logs na sṅon byaṅ chub sems dpaḥ bźugs bźugs paḥi ri *Rgya misho chen po bźiḥi gnas Rdo rjeḥi ri* źes bya ba yod de. de la byaṅ chub sems dpaḥ *Chos kyis ḥphags pa* źes bya ba byaṅ chub sems dpaḥi ḥkhor brgya phrag bcu gñis daṅ ldan pa chos ston to.

7. Śar loḥi phyogs mtshams logs na sṅon byaṅ chub sems dpaḥ bźugs bźugs paḥi ri *Mchod rten* źes bya ba yod de. de la byaṅ chub sems dpaḥ *Lhaḥi khuṅ po* źes bya ba byaṅ chub sems dpaḥi ḥkhor stoṅ daṅ ldan pa chos ston to.

8. Lho daṅ nub kyi phyogs mtshams logs na sṅon byaṅ chub sems dpaḥ bźugs bźugs paḥi ri *Ḥod* ces bya ba yod de. de la byaṅ chub sems dpaḥ *Bzaṅ poḥi dpal* źes bya ba byaṅ chub sems dpaḥi ḥkhor stoṅ phrag gsum daṅ bdan pa chos ston to.

9. Nub daṅ byaṅ gi>[187]) phyogs mtshams logs na sṅon byaṅ chub sems dpaḥ bźugs bźugs paḥi ri *Spos kyi ṅad can* źes bya ba yod de. de la byaṅ chub sems dpaḥ *Spos kyi ḥod zer rab tu ḥgyed pa* źes bya ba byaṅ chub sems dpaḥi ḥkhor stoṅ phrag lṅa daṅ ldan pa chos ston to.

6. Dans la région intermédiaire du nord-est (*uttarapūrvasyāṃ vidiśi*), il y a le mont appelé „Montagne de diamant se trouvant dans les quatre grands océans" (*caturmahāsamudrastha vajraparvata*) et habité autrefois par des bodhisattva. C'est là que le bodhisattva Dharmodgata, entouré de 1.200 bodhisattva, prêche la Loi.

7. Dans la région intermédiaire du sud-est (*pūrvadakṣiṇasyāṃ vidiśi*), il y a le Mont du temple (*caityaparvata*) habité autrefois par des bodhisattva. C'est là que le bodhisattva Devacūḍa, entouré de 1.000 bodhisattva, prêche la Loi.

8. Dans la région intermédiaire du sud-ouest (*dakṣiṇapaścimāyāṃ vidiśi*), il y a le Mont Éclat (*prabhāparvata*) habité autrefois par des bodhisattva. C'est là que le bodhisattva Bhadraśrī, entouré de 3.000 bodhisattva, prêche la Loi.

9. Dans la région intermédiaire du nord-ouest (*paścimottarasyāṃ vidiśi*), il y a le Mont des parfums énivrants (*Gandhamādana*) habité autrefois par des bodhisattva. C'est là que le bodhisattva Gandharaśmipramukta, entouré de 5.000 bodhisattva, prêche la Loi.

Ce texte est manifestement interpolé car il énumère neuf régions alors qu'une surface plane n'en comporte que huit[188]). La région de l'est (n° 1) était déjà occupée par le bodhisattva Vajraśrī. C'est donc postérieurement qu'on y a ajouté (sub 5⁰) Mañjusrī.

Les deux versions chinoises, elles aussi, ont un bodhisattva en trop, ainsi qu'il ressort de la concordance que voici, où *S-T* désigne la recension sanskrito-tibétaine, *Chin. 1* la traduction chinoise de de Buddhabhadra (T 278), et *Chin. 2* la traduction chinoise de Śikṣānanda (T 279).

Cette concordance appelle les constations suivantes:

1. Il y a un bodhisattva en trop puisqu'on en cite 9 alors qu'il n'y a que 8 régions.

2. Il y a accord parfait entre les trois traductions en ce qui concerne 7 bod-

| | Montagne | | Bodhisattva | Région |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | S-T | Ṛṣyutpāda | Vajraśrī | Est |
| | Chin. 1 | 仙人起山 | 金剛勝 | Est |
| | Chin. 2 | 仙人山 | 金剛勝 | Est |
| 2 | S-T | Śrīkūṭa | Dharmamati | Sud |
| | Chin. 1 | 勝樓閣 | 法慧 | Sud |
| | Chin. 2 | 勝峯 | 法慧 | Sud |
| 3 | S-T | Vajrārcis | Siṃhavikrāntagāmin | Ouest |
| | Chin. 1 | 金剛焰 | 無畏師子行 | Ouest |
| | Chin. 2 | 金剛焰 | 精進無畏行 | Ouest |
| 4 | S-T | Gandhakūṭa | Gandhahastin | Nord |
| | Chin. 1 | 香聚 | 香象 | Nord |
| | Chin. 2 | 香積 | 香象 | Nord |
| 5 | S-T | Śādvalaparvata | Mañjuśrī | Est |
| | Chin. 1 | 清涼山 | 文殊師利 | Nord-Est |
| | Chin. 2 | 清涼山 | 文殊師利 | Nord-Est |
| 6 | S-T | Caturmahāsamudrastha Vajraparvata | Dharmodgata | Nord-Est |
| | Chin. 1 | 四大海中枳怛 | 曇無竭 | pas mentionnée |
| | Chin. 2 | 海中金剛山 | 法起 | pas mentionnée |
| 7 | S-T | Caityaparvata | Devacūḍa | Sud-Est |
| | Chin. 1 | 枝堅固 | 天冠 | Sud-Est |
| | Chin. 2 | 支提山 | 天冠 | Sud-Est |
| 8 | S-T | Prabhāparvata | Bhadraśrī | Sud-Ouest |
| | Chin. 1 | 樹提光明山 | 賢首 | Sud-Ouest |
| | Chin. 2 | 光明山 | 賢勝 | Sud-Ouest |
| 9 | S-T | Gandhamādana | Gandharaśmipramukta | Nord-Ouest |
| | Chin. 1 | 香風山 | 香光明 | Nord-Ouest |
| | Chin. 2 | 香風山 | 香光 | Nord-Ouest |

hisattva: 1. Vajraśrī à l'Est, 2. Dharmamati au Sud, 3. Siṃhavikrāntagāmin à l'Ouest, 4. Gandhahastin au Nord, 5. Devacūḍa au Sud-Est, 6. Bhadraśrī au Sud-Ouest, 7. Gandhara-śmipramukta au Nord-Ouest.

3. Il y a désaccord en ce qui concerne deux bodhisattva: Majuśrī et Dharmodgata.

a) S-T situe Mañjuśrī au Śādvalaparvata „Montagne herbeuse" dans la région de l'Est où la place est déjà occupée par Vajraśrī.

Les deux versions chinoises situent Mañjuśrī au. Ts'ing-leang chan dans la région du Nord-Est.

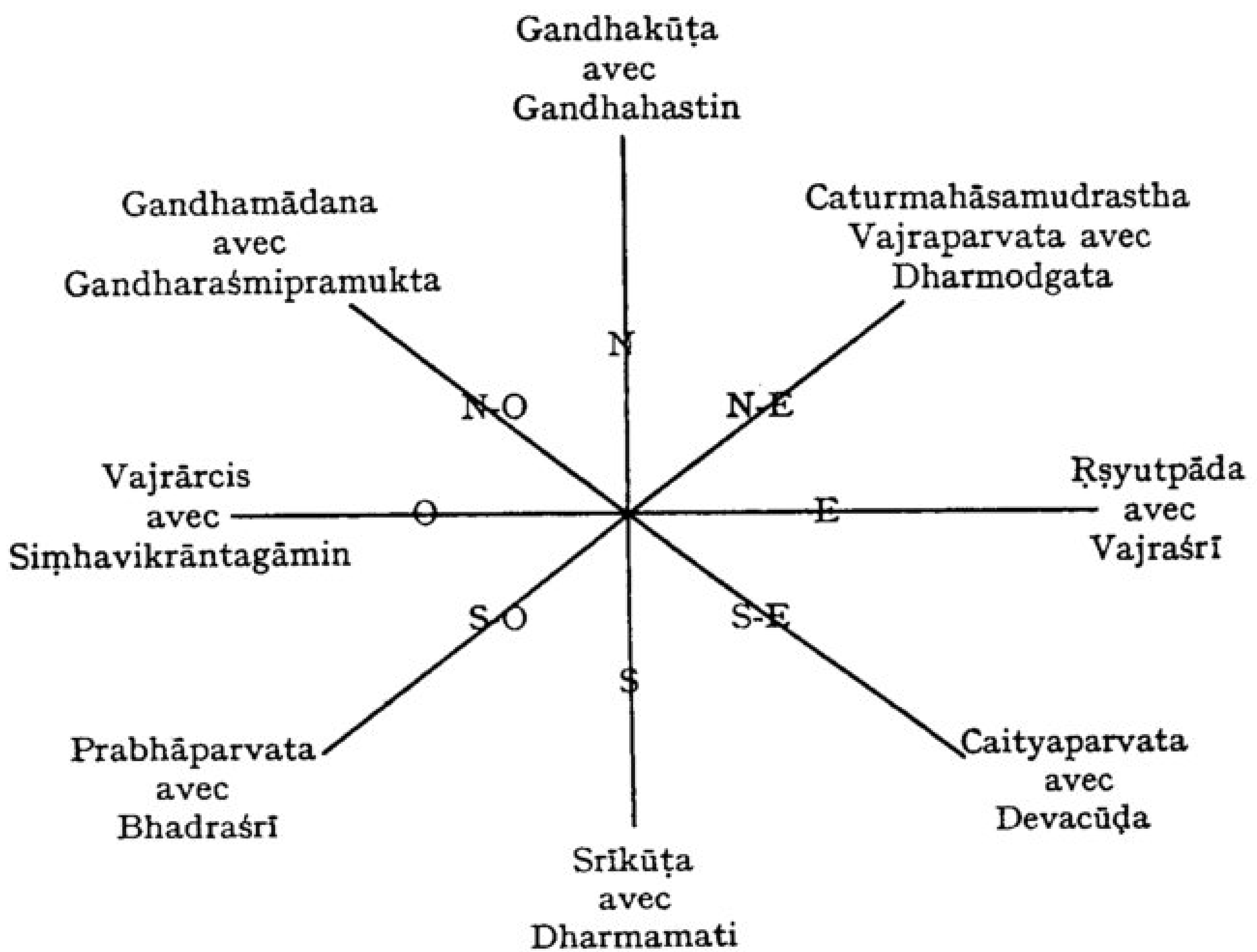
C'est là où gît l'interpolation car il y a désaccord en ce qui concerne la montagne: Śādvalaparvata, qui signifie montagne herbeuse, n'a rien de commun avec Ts'ing-leang chan qui signifie „Mont frais" et se dirait en sanskrit *Śītaparvata* ou *Śītalaparvata* et, en tibétain, *Ri graṅ ba*[189]).

Dans l'esprit des Chinois, Ts'ing-leang chan désigne un lieu géographique, en l'occurrence le Wou-t'ai chan au Chan-si. Mais le contexte prouve que l'*Avataṃsaka* entend seulement énumérer les montagnes mythiques des huit points cardinaux comme on en trouve dans toutes les littératures de l'Inde[190]).

Enfin on ne voit pas bien pourquoi les rédacteurs indiens de l'*Avataṃsaka* auraient placé Mañjuśrī en Chine. Depuis Aśoka, les Indiens ont pris l'habitude de faire la morale à leurs voisins, mais ce n'est pas une raison pour céder un bodhisattva à des étrangers.

b) L'introduction de Mañjuśrī a quelque peu bousculé le bodhisattva Dharmodgata résidant sur le Vajraparvata au fond des quatre océans. S-T s'en est tiré en le plaçant ou plutôt en le maintenant dans la région du Nord-Est. Quant aux deux versions chinoises, elles ont purement et simplement supprimé la mention de la région.

Il résulte de cet examen que la mention de Mañjuśrī et de sa montagne (soit Śādvalaparvata, soit Ts'ing-leang chan) est une interpolation et que la recension primitive comprenait seulement huit bodhisattva et huit montagnes répartis de la façon suivante:




*Date de l'interpolation.*—Absente du texte original, la mention de Mañjuśrī au Ts'ing-leang chan se trouve dans les deux traductions chinoises de l'*Avataṃsaka*, celle de Buddhabhadra exécutée entre 418 et 420 et celle de Śikṣānanda exécutée entre 695 et 699.

Ainsi qu'on l'a vu plus haut, dès le début du Ve siècle, donc à l'époque de la

première traduction, le Wou-t'ai était déjà considéré par les Chinois comme l'habitat de Mañjuśrī. Il n'est donc pas impossible que ce soient Buddhabhadra et ses collaborateurs Houei-yen, Houei-yi, etc., qui aient introduit dans l'*Avataṃsaka* la mention du Ts'ing-leang chan. Mais c'est bien improbable, parce qu'à cette époque l'*Avataṃsaka* était peu connu en Chine et son prestige n'était pas tel qu'une interpolation eût paru s'imposer.

C'est seulement au cours des VIe et VIIe siècles que se formèrent les grandes écoles se réclamant de l'*Avataṃsaka* et que ce Sūtra acquit une autorité incontestable.

Au début de la période *yong-p'ing* 永平 (508) de l'empereur Siuan Wou Ti 宣武 des Pei Wei, deux maîtres indiens, Bodhiruci et Ratnamati, vinrent s'établir à Lo-yang et, sur l'invitation de l'empereur, exécutèrent, d'abord séparément, puis ensemble, une traduction du *Daśabhūmivyākhyāna* (T 1522) de Vasubandhu. C'est alors que se forma l'école du Ti-louen-tsong 地論宗 ou du *Traité des Daśabhūmi*; le *Daśabhūmika* était l'une des sections de l'*Avataṃsaka*. A Lo-yang même, l'école se divisa bientôt en deux branches. Tao-tch'ong 道寵, disciple de Bodhiruci et chef de la branche du Nord 北道派 se rendit célèbre par ses vertus et gagna à ses idées plus de dix mille adhérents. La branche du Sud 南道派 qui se réclamait de Ratnamati fut illustrée par Houei-kouang 慧光 (468–537) et son disciple Fa-chang 法上 (495–580) qui développèrent une grande activité littéraire.

Au VIIe siècle, l'école du Ti-louen-tsong fut absorbée par l'école du Houa-yen-tsong 華嚴宗 ou de l'*Avataṃsaka* proprement dit. Son fondateur et son premier patriarche Tou-chouen 杜順 (557–640), en religion Fa-chouen 法順, se concilia les bonnes grâces de l'empereur des T'ang, T'ai-tsong 太宗, qui régna de 626 à 649. Il se rendit fameux par ses miracles et passait pour une incarnation de Mañjuśrī.

Il a déjà été question plus haut[91]) de la formidable activité littéraire déployée au VIIe siècle autour de l'*Avataṃsaka* par Tcheyen (602–668) et Fa-tsang (643–712) qui furent respectivement les deuxième et troisième patriarches de la secte. A cette époque, le culte de Mañjuśrī au Wou-t'ai chan était en plein essor. On recherchait fébrilement les recensions longues de l'*Avataṃsaka* où la présence du grand Bodhisattva sur la montagne chinoise aurait pu être expressément définie. La recension en 40.000 *gāthā* découverte au Khotan par les envoyés de l'impératrice Wou Tsö-t'ien et apportée à Lo-yang par Śikṣānanda ne contenait rien de pareil. Mañjuśrī ne figurait pas parmi les huit bodhisattva localisés par l'*Avataṃsaka* aux quatre points cardinaux et aux quatre régions intermédiaires du Continent habité. Il convenait de réparer un „oubli" aussi regrettable. C'est la tâche que s'assignèrent les Bodhiruci, Yi-tsing, Fou-li, Fa-tsang et toute l'équipe de lecteurs, traducteurs, scribes et vérificateurs réunis autour de l'impératrice dans le Fo-cheou-ki sseu de Lo-yang. On introduisit, dans la traduction, un passage définissant la présence actuelle de Mañjuśrī dans la région du Nord-Est, au mont Ts'ing-leang.

Pour ce faire, il fallut expulser Dharmodgata de la région du Nord-Est où il

était primitivement situé et le reléguer dans une région non mentionnée. Il fallut aussi retoucher en conséquence l'ancienne version de l'*Avataṃsaka* établie en 418–420 par Buddhabhadra sur la recension en 36.000 *gāthā* de Fa-ling. Il importait enfin, pour supprimer toute trace de l'interpolation, de remanier l'original sanskrit qui avait servi de base à la traduction de Śikṣānanda. Cet original ayant disparu, nous ignorons comment il fut modifié. Assez maladroitement, semble-t-il. Car la version tibétaine des débuts du IXe siècle qui en est le lointain écho situe Mañjuśrī non pas dans la région du nord-est, mais dans celle de l'est, déjà occupée par Vajraśrī. De plus, elle lui assigne comme montagne un Spaṅ-ri (Śādvalaparvata) qui n'a rien de commun ni avec le Ts'ing-leang chan ni avec le Wou t'ai chan.

### *3. Les Indiens au Wou-t'ai chan*

Quoi qu'il en soit, les Chinois croyaient sincèrement à la présence de Mañjuśrī au Wou-t'ai, et leur foi était si vive qu'elle finit par se communiquer aux Indiens, mais ce ne fut qu'à la fin du VIIe siècle.

Dans sa *Relation sur le bouddhisme expédiée des Mers du Sud*, c'est-à-dire de Śrīvijaya, en 692, Yi-tsing, aussi fervent patriote que bouddhiste convaincu, souligne avec complaisance le prestige dont jouissait la Chine des T'ang: „Dans les cinq Indes, y a-t-il quelqu'un qui ne l'admire point? A l'intérieur des quatre mers, qui donc ne reçoit respectueusement ses décrets? Les Indiens disent que Mañjuśrī est actuellement présent en ce pays (la Chine)"[192]). — „Un Stotra fait en Occident dit: Mañjuśrī se trouve actuellement à Ping-tcheou 并州[193]); là, tout le monde a des mérites (*puṇya*): nous devons donc respecter et admirer ce pays"[194]).

Trois ans plus tard, Yi-tsing devait participer, dans les circonstances que l'on sait, à la „traduction" de l'*Avataṃsaka*. Son assertion ne péserait donc pas d'un grand poids si elle n'était confirmée, du côté indien, par des témoignages non suspects.

Ce sont tout d'abord des textes indiens affirmant la présence de Mañjuśrī en Chine:

1. Le *Mañjuśrīdharmaratnagarbhadhāraṇīsūtra* est clair et formel.

Le Buddha y déclare au bodhisattva Vajraguhyaka:

> Après mon Nirvāṇa, dans la région située au nord-est du Jambudvīpa (Inde), il y a un pays nommé Ta Tchen-na 大振那 (Mahācīna). Dans ce pays, il y a une montagne appelée Wou-ting 五頂 (Pañcaśikha = Wou-t'ai). Mañjuśrī kumārabhūta se rendra en cette résidence et y prêchera la Loi aux êtres[195]).

Cette *dhāraṇī* fut traduite la quatrième année de la période *king-long* 景龍 (710), au monastère du Si-tch'ong-fou sseu 西崇福寺 de Lo-yang par Bodhiruci[196]) qui avait participé lui aussi à la traduction de l'*Avataṃsaka* en

695–699. Il y aurait donc lieu de vérifier l'authenticité d'une référence aussi précise et aussi formelle au Wou-t'ai chan. Malheureusement, l'original sanskrit de la *dhāraṇī* ne nous est pas parvenu et, pour autant que je sache, ancune traduction tibétaine n'en fut exécutée. Tout moyen de contrôle faisant défaut, nous sommes forcés d'accepter les yeux fermés l'unique témoignage de la traduction chinoise. Nous savons seulement qu'elle fut exécutée par Bodhiruci sur un original sanskrit (*fan-pen*) dont lecture était donnée par Prajñāgupta.

2. En revanche, nous lisons dans l'original sanskrit un vers du *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* (ch. 36 *Rājavyākaraṇaparivarta*, v. 568) où il est dit à propos du Mahācīna (Chine):

> *Bodhisattvo mahādhīraḥ Mañjughoṣo mahādyutiḥ, tasmin deśe tu sākṣād vai tiṣṭhate bālarūpiṇaḥ*[197]).

„En ce pays (la Chine), se trouve présentement, sous la forme d'un jeune homme, le bodhisattva Mañjughoṣa, très ferme et de grand éclat".

Ce vers est d'autant plus intéressant qu'il fait partie d'un chapitre ne figurant point dans la version chinoise du *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* (T 1191) exécutée sous les Song par T'ien-si-tsai 天息災 entre 980 et 1.000. Il prouve, si besoin en est, qu'à cette époque relativement tardive, les Indiens situaient Mañjuśrī en Chine.

Un détail minime peut avoir contribué à cette conviction. On a vu plus haut comment les légendes khotanaises relatives à Mañjuśrī ont été transplantées au Népal parce que, à un moment donné, le toponyme *Li-yul*, qui désignait primitivement le Khotan, a été pris pour le Népal. Nous avons déjà signalé la collusion qui a toujours existé entre Mañjuśrī, le bodhisattva à la voix douce, et le roi des Gandharva, le dieu-musicien Pañcaśikha. Or celui-ci était localisé aux confins du Kaśmīr, tandis que son fils aîné (son *jyeṣṭhaputra* ou *kumāra*) avait sa résidence dans le district himâlayen de la Cīnabhukti, là où Kaniṣka avait confiné ses otages chinois[198]). Entre *Cīnabhukti*, district indien, et *Cīna* tout court désignant la Chine, la confusion était facile, et tous les traducteurs chinois et tibétains de la *Mahāmāyūrī* sont tombés dans le piège[199]).

Dès la fin du VII^e siècle, le Wou-t'ai chan devint un centre de pèlerinage international, et les Indiens furent les premiers à s'y rendre.

1. *Buddhapālita en* 676. — C'était un moine kaśmīrien, connu pour sa traduction d'une *Uṣṇīṣavijayadhāraṇī* (T 967). Dans la préface de 689 annexée à cette traduction[200]), on lit:

> La première année de la période *yi-fong* 儀鳳 (676), le śramane Buddhapālita, d'origine brâhmanique, vint des pays d'Occident à la terre des Han et du Wou-t'ai chan. S'étant prosterné à terre de ses cinq membres, il dit, tourné vers la montagne et touchant le sol du haut de sa tête: „Depuis le Nirvāṇa du Tathāgata, tous les saints ont disparu; seul le grand sage Mañjuśrī, fixé sur cette montagne, attire les foules et enseigne les bodhisattva. Hélasl moi Pālita, lors de ma naissance, j'ai

rencontré les huit conditions inopportunes (*akṣaṇa*) et je n'ai jamais vu le visage du saint. Aussi, suis-je venu de loin, à travers les Sables mouvants, exprès pour le visiter. Je supplie humblement P'ou-fou 普覆 (Mañjuśrī), le grand bienveillant et le grand compatissant, de se montrer à moi." Ayant dit ces mots, il pleura tristement et versa des larmes. Tourné vers la montagne, il se prosterna la tête au sol. Lorsqu'il la redressa, il vit soudain un vieillard, sorti de la montagne, venir vers lui.

Le vieillard parlant la langue des brâhmanes (sanskrit) dit au moine: „Maître de la Loi, par amour de la doctrine, vous poursuivez les vestiges sacrés et, sans craindre les fatigues, vous êtes venu de loin à leur recherche. Cependant ici, dans la terre des Han, les êtres commettent beaucoup de péchés et les religieux eux-mêmes violent souvent la discipline des défenses. Il n'y a que le *Buddhoṣṇīṣavijayadhāraṇīsūtra*[201]) qui puisse détruire toutes les mauvaises actions des êtres. Mais je ne sais, ô maître de la Loi, si vous êtes venu ici avec ce Sūtra".

Le moine répondit: „Le pauvre moine que je suis est venu simplement en visite: je suis arrivé sans le Sūtra".

Le vieillard reprit: „Puisque vous êtes arrivé sans le Sūtra, vous êtes venu en vain et inutilement. Même si vous voyiez Mañju, vous ne le reconnaîtriez pas. Maître, retournez donc aux pays d'Occident prendre ce Sūtra pour qu'à la suite il se répande en terre des Han. Ce faisant, vous honorerez tous les saints, vous aiderez largement les êtres en les sauvant des ténèbres et vous reconnaîtrez les bienfaits du Buddha, Maître, revenez ici avec le Sūtra, et votre serviteur vous montrera alors l'endroit où se trouve le bodhisattva Mañjuśrī".

Quand le moine eut entendu ces paroles, il ne put dominer sa joie. Réprimant ses larmes, il s'inclina de tout cœur et respectueusement. Mais, au moment où il releva la tête, il ne vit plus le vieillard.

Tout surpris, le moine redoubla de dévotion. Résolument et sincèrement, il retourna aux pays d'Occident, prit le *Buddhoṣṇīṣavijayadhāraṇīsūtra* et revint en Chine. La deuxième année de la période *yong-chouen* 永淳 (683), il artiva à la capitale occidentale (Tch'angngan). Il relata toute son histoire au grand empereur[202]). Le grand empereur prit son texte (sanskrit) et l'enferma en son palais. Puis il invita le maître de la Loi trepiṭaka Jetchao 日照 (Divākara), et il ordonna à Tou Hing-k'ai 杜行顗, chef de l'office de l'intendance des hôtes à la cour du cérémonial envers les étrangers[203]), et à d'autres, de traduire ensemble ce Sūtra[204]). Enfin l'empereur assigna au moine (Buddhapālita) trente pièces de soie, mais le texte du Sūtra fut enfermé au palaiš, avec interdiction d'en sortir.

Le moine, pleurant tristement, dit à l'empereur: „Pauvre moine que je suis, j'ai sacrifié ma vie et, cédant à un ordre, je suis allé au loin chercher ce Sūtra. Mon espoir est de sauver les êtres et de les arracher à

la douleur. Je ne songe pas aux richesses et je ne m'intéresse pas à la gloire. Je vous prie de me rendre le texte du Sūtra pour qu'il se répande et que tous les êtres en partagent le bienfait".

Alors l'empereur conserva la traduction [chinoise] du Sūtra et rendit au moine le texte sanskrit. Le moine en possession du texte sanskrit se rendit au monastère de Si-ming sseu 西明寺 et, après s'êtra informé, trouva un moine chinois versé en sanskrit: Chouen-tcheng 順貞, Il demanda l'autorisation de traduire avec lui, et l'empereur céda à sa demande. Alors le moine, en présence de tous les bhadanta, fit avec Chouen-tcheng une nouvelle traduction[205]. Quand elle fut finie, il prit avec lui le texte sanskrit et se rendit au Wou-t'ai chan. Il entra dans la montagne et, à l'heure actuelle, n'en est pas encore ressorti.

Tout imprégné de légende qu'il soit, le récit de l'ascension de Buddhapālita fut rapidement cliché. Il est reproduit intégralement dans les excellents catalogues de Tche-cheng publiés en 730[206]. On le retrouve également dans les *Biographies des moines éminents* compilées sous les Song entre 982 et 988[207], ainsi que dans les *Traditions développées sur le Ts'ing-leang* publiées par Yen-yi en 1060[208]. Mention en est faite dans une inscription de Touenhouang[209], dans l'*Hymne du Wou-t'ai chan* de la fin du VIII^e^ siècle[210], ainsi que dans le *Journal de voyage* du pèlerin japonais Ennin.

2. *Bodhisena en* 735. — Selon l'histoire officielle japonaise, à la 8^e^ lune de 736, une ambassade envoyée chez les T'ang ramena trois hommes des T'ang et un Persan, qui se présentèrent à la cour à la 1o^e^ lune. On donna des vêtements de saison au bonze des T'ang Tao-siuan 道璿 et au bonze brâhmane Bodhi. A la 4^e^ lune de 751, un décret nomma le maître de la loi Bodhi directeur du Saṃgha en remplacement de Gyōgi.

Sur cette base historique est venue se greffer, au XII^e^ siècle, une légende attribuant à Bodhi l'introduction au Japon de danses et de musiques čames. Le brâhmane Bodhi, originaire de Kapilavastu dans l'Inde du Sud, accompagné du maître Buttetsu 師佛哲, musicien du royaume de Čampa (Rinyū) 瞻婆 dans l'Inde du Nord, s'était rendu au Wou-t'ai chan pour adorer Mañjuśrī. Un vieillard leur ayant appris que Mañjuśrī s'était incarné au Japon en la personne de Gyōgi Bosatsu 行基菩薩, ils avaient gagné ce pays où ils furent reçus par Gyōgi et assistèrent à une cérémonie du Tōdai-ji en 752.

M. Demiéville a montré que, si l'existence du brâhmane Bodhi ne peut être mise en doute, son compagnon čam Buttetsu fut inventé de toutes pièces et baptisé peut-être d'un des noms du Čampa connus alors au Japon[211].

3. *Amoghavajra en 770.* — D'une famille de l'Inde du Nord ou peut-être de Samarkand, Amoghavajra[212] naquit à Ceylan en 705. A 10 ans, il arriva en Chine avec son oncle. Il fut converti à la religion bouddhique par Vajrabodhi (671–741), et entra dans les ordres à l'âge de 15 ans. Initié par son maître au Tantra bouddhique, il travailla à Lo-yang à partir de 723. De 741 à 746 il voyagea à Ceylan et peut-être en Inde, où il réunit une grande collection de

Sūtra et de Śāstra. Rentré en Chine, il travailla à Chao-tcheou, Ho-si et Wou-Wei, pour se fixer enfin à la capitale, Tch'ang-ngan (756), où il fut tout puissant à la cour. Il mourut en 774.

Sa visite au Wou-t'ai eut lieu la cinquième année de la période *ta-li* 大曆 (770)[213], sous le règne de l'empereur Tai-tsong 代宗 (762–777). En 766 déjà, le monastère du Kin-ko sseu 金閣寺 „Pavillon d'or" avait été construit au Wou-t'ai sur son initiative[214]. Les frais avaient été couverts par le richissime ministre Wang Tsin 王縉, frère du poète Wang Wei 王維.

4. Prājña en 794. — Le kaśmīrien Prājña, du clan Gautama, quitta son pays natal à l'âge de 14 ans et entra en religion à l'âge de 20 ans. Après dix-huit années d'études faites en partie à Nālandā, il se rendit dans l'Inde du Sud, au monastère du roi de Wou-tch'a 烏荼 (Udra, Odra = Orissa), dont le roi offrit aux T'ang en 795 un manuscrit sanskrit de l'*Avataṃsaka* qui fut traduit par Prājña (T 293: *Gaṇḍavyūha*)[215]. „Là, il apprend que le grand saint Mañju, le jeune homme aux cinq chignons (*pañcacīra kumārabhūta*), se trouve à Ts'ing-leang, au Pañcaśikha (Wou-fong), et qu'ayant éteint le feu des passions et entouré de dix mille Bodhisattva, il protège les grands T'ang". Prājña résolut de se rendre auprès de lui et, après avoir traversé les mers et franchi les montagnes, il arriva en Chine vers la fin de la période *kien-tchong* 建中 (784). Mais l'empereur Tö-tsong l'astreignit aussitôt à des travaux de traduction, et il dut retarder son pèlerinage. „Mais, la 8e année de la période *tcheng-yuan* 貞元 (792), il fit retour au palais et dit à l'empereur: Mon seul désir n'est pas encore réalisé: je n'ai pas eu le loisir de visiter le grand saint Mañju. Je songe à ma promesse antérieure et mon cœur se consume. Si ce n'est pas contraire à vos bienveillantes intentions, j'ai juré de m'y rendre en personne. La troisième lune de la 10e année de la période *tcheng-yuan* (794), il alla à Ts'ing-leang et parcourut le Wou-t'ai jusqu'au début de l'automne. La quatrième lune de la 11e année (795), il était de retour à la capitale"[216].

Les pèlerins du Wou-t'ai ne se recrutaient pas uniquement parmi les Indiens. Le japonais Ennin 圓仁 (794–864), au cours de son voyage en Chine (838–847), séjourna sur la montagne, de juin à août 840, et la décrit comme le centre du bouddhisme le plus important en Chine avec le T'ien-t'ai chan[217]. Selon Bu-ston[218], le roi tibétain Sroṅ-bcan-sgam-po († 650) aurait fait le pèlerinage au Wou-t'ai, mais, ainsi que M. Demiéville l'a montré, la montagne sacrée ne dut être connue au Tibet que sensiblement plus tard. Les sources tibétaines qui la mentionnent ne sont pas antérieures aux IXe–Xe siècles[219].

## IX. La dévotion à Mañjuśrī

Les Tathāgata, saints, parfaitement et pleinement illuminés, sont au centre même de la métaphysique et de la mystique bouddhique. Ils exercent la souveraineté (*vibhutva*) sur toutes choses et dominent tous les univers par leurs pénétrations sans obstacle (*apratihatābhijñā*). Leur corps est éternel parce qu'il se confond avec la Manière d'être des choses (*tathatā*), inaltérable et immuable.

Ils sont absolument sans reproches (*niravadya*) parce qu'ils ont triomphé de l'obstacle en passion (*kleśāvaraṇa*) et de l'obstacle du savoir (*jñeyāvaraṇa*). Ils exercent leur activité salvifique automatiquement et sans effort (*anābhoga*), pareils à ces instruments de musique célestes qui jouent sans être frappés. Ils jouissent de toutes les qualités et les déploient pour orner leurs champs de Buddha. Ils sont exempts de souillure car, tout en apparaissant dans le monde, ils ne sont souillés par aucune conjoncture humaine. Ils sont éminement bienfaisants car, en manifestant la suprême illumination (*saṃbodhi*) et le Nirvāṇa, ils mûrissent les êtres non encore mûrs et délivrent les êtres déjà mûris[220].

C'est à juste titre que, dès les origines mêmes du bouddhisme, on applique aux Buddha les épithètes de *Sarvanarottama* „Supérieur à tous les hommes", *Asama* „Sans égal", *Asamasama* „Égal à ce qui n'a pas d'égal".

Néanmoins, dans les Mahāyānasūtra, il est plus souvent question des Bodhisattva que des Buddha, et cette partialité n'a pas manqué d'intriguer les spécialistes les plus avertis. Comme toujours, c'est dans les textes eux-mêmes que l'on trouve la solution à ce problème[221].

„C'est que, nous dit Candrakīrti, des rois des Muni (c'est-à-dire des Buddha) naissent les Śrāvaka et les Pratyekabuddha, et du Bodhisattva naît le Buddha".

Le Buddha engendre le Śrāvaka en lui enseignant exactement la loi de la production en dépendance des phénomènes (*pratītyasamutpāda*). En l'entendant, en y réfléchissant et en la méditant, le Śrāvaka, littéralement „l'auditeur", arrive à la condition parfaite, à la sainteté (*arhattva*), au Nirvāṇa. La connaissance de la vérité conduit sûrement au Nirvāṇa, sinon actuellement, au moins dans une autre vie.

Si les Buddha n'apparaissent pas dans le monde et si les Śrāvaka ont disparu, le savoir surgit isolément chez les Pratyekabuddha. En l'absence de tout enseignement et sans l'aide d'amis spirituels, les Pratyekabuddha découvrent d'eux-mêmes la vérité, par la seule prééminence de leurs mérites et de leur savoir. Ils l'emportent en grandeur sur les Śrāvaka. Mais, comme ils ne prêchent pas la vérité et ne connaissent à fond que les caractères généraux des choses, ils n'ont pas cette grande compassion (*mahākaruṇā*) ni cette omniscience (*sarvajñatā*) qui caractérisent les Buddha.

Il est donc parfaitement exact de dire que les Śrāvaka et les Pratyekabuddha „naissent" des Buddha. Il n'en va pas de même pour les Bodhisattva, et ce n'est qu'improprement qu'on les appelle *Jinaputra* „Fils du Victorieux". Le contraire est vrai: le Buddha est issu du Bodhisattva. Il y a à cela deux raisons:

1. L'état de Buddha a pour antécédent l'état de Bodhisattva. On ne devient pas Buddha sans avoir été, au préalable, Bodhisattva. La production de la pensée de la Bodhi (*cittotpāda*) par le Bodhisattva est la cause ou le germe de la suprême et parfaite Bodhi des Buddha. Le Bodhisattva est la pousse d'où sortira le Buddha (*buddhāṅkura*). Si nous admirons ces grands arbres de guérison (*bhaiṣajyataru*) que sont les Buddha, n'oublions point l'humble pousse dont ces arbres tirent leur vitalité.

2. L'Écriture nous apprend que le bienheureux Śākyamuni et d'autres Tathāgata, au début de leur carrière, ont été induits à prendre la pensée d'illumination par Ārya Mañjuśrī, le Bodhisattva.

Dans l'*Ajātaśatrukaukṛtyavinodana*, Śākyamuni se plaît à rendre au Bodhisattva. ce témoignage solennel:

> Si aujourd'hui je suis Buddha, si je possède les 32 marques (*lakṣaṇa*) et les 80 sous-marques (*anuvyañjana*), la majesté et la noblesse, si je sauve tous les êtres des dix régions, tout cela est une faveur de Mañjuśrī. Autrefois, il fut mon maître. Dans le passé, d'innombrables Buddha furent tous les disciples de Mañjuśrī, et les Buddha du futur également seront menés par sa force majestueuse et bienveillante. De même que, dans le monde, tout enfant a un père et une mère, ainsi dans la religion du Buddha, Mañjuśrī est le père et la mère[222].

Le rôle maternel de Mañjuśrī se confond avec celui de la Perfection de sagesse: „la mère qui engendre les Tathāgata, saints, parfaitement et pleinement illuminés, qui leur montre l'omniscience et les initie au monde qu'elle leur présente comme vide, etc."[223]

Si les Bodhisattva engendrent les Buddha, de qui proviennent-ils euxmêmes? Leur génération est toute spirituelle.

C'est la pensée de compassion (*karuṇācitta*), la connaissance exempte de dualité (*advayajñāna*) et la pensée d'illumination (*bodhicitta*) qui sont la cause des Fils du Victorieux.

La compassion est la condition indispensable de cette moisson bénie que sont les Bodhisattva. Le compatissant, en effet, souffrant par la souffrance d'autrui et voulant protéger tous ceux qui souffrent, produira certainement cette pensée: „Il faut absolument que je m'applique à la conquête de l'état de Buddha en retirant tout cet univers de la souffrance". Or cette résolution ne peut être réalisée en dehors du savoir exempt de dualité, exempt des couples d'extrêmes (*antadvaya*), être et non-être, etc. Le savoir exempt de dualité aboutit à la pensée d'illumination qui pénètre tous les principes comme adventices et instables, et identiques au *dharmadhātu*. Cette pensée est sans souillure (*vimala*) et indestructible (*akṣara*) parce qu' elle porte sur la vacuité (*śūnyatā*) de toutes les choses, sur leur absence de caractères (*ānimitta*), sur leur non-valeur (*apraṇihita*).

Les Bodhisattva sont la pousse (*aṅkura*) qui surgit de la grande compassion, tandis que les Buddha en sont le fruit (*phala*) éloigné. C'est pour cette raison que les Buddha font l'éloge des Bodhisattva:

> De même qu'on vénère la nouvelle lune et non pas la pleine lune, de même ceux qui ont foi en moi doivent vénérer les Bodhisattva et non pas les Tathāgata. Et pour quelle raison? Parce que les Tathāgata tirent leur origine des Bodhisattva. En revanche, des Tathāgata, procèdent tous les Śrāvaka et Pratyekabuddha[224].

C'est ainsi qu'entre Mañjuśrī et les adeptes du Grand Véhicule, plus spécialement les Mādhyamika, se sont établies des relations d'amitié confiante. Druma, le roi des Kiṃnara, déclare à Ajātaśatru: „Tu as gagné de grands avantages: tu as obtenu le Buddha Bhagavat et Mañjuśrī comme amis spirituels (*kalyāṇamitra*)"[225]. Et le Buddha lui-même notifie à Śāriputra: „Mañjuśrī est le père et la mère des Bodhisattva, et il est leur ami spirituel"[226]. Le dévot qui prononce son nom, qui récite ses Ṣūtra, qui contemple sa statue en retire d'énormes avantages: il retranche des milliers de Kalpa aux douleurs de la transmigration, échappe aux destinées mauvaises, renaît dans la famille des Buddha et dans les terres pures. Śrāvaka, il obtient rapidement l'état d'Arhat; mahâyâniste, il devient sans retard un bodhisattva sans recul (*avaivartika*).

Avec la décadence du bouddhisme ou, si l'on préfère, avec le développement du Véhicule tantrique, le culte de Mañjuśrī gagne encore en importance. Au VIIe siècle et peut-être avant, des pèlerinages s'organisent au Gandhamādana, au Gośṛṅga, au Wout'ai chan, vers ces montagnes aux cinq pics où le grand Bodhisattva est censé résider.

Mais les pèlerins sont toujours déçus. Jamais ils ne rencontrent Mañjuśrī, si ce n'est en songe. La raison en est que, du point de vue de la vérité absolue (*paramārthasatya*), le Bodhisattva n'est qu'un nom et n'existe absolument pas. Être de Bodhi, tirant toute sa réalité de la pensée de la Bodhi, Mañjuśrī a déclaré lui-même que Bodhi et pensée ne se trouvent nulle part[227].

L'unique moyen de trouver Mañjuśrī est d'en faire l'objet de ses méditations et d'orner sa propre pensée par le déploiement de toutes les qualités (*guṇavyūha*) du grand Bodhisattva. Encore ce jeu mystique est-il fallacieux parce qu'il implique dualité. Or la doctrine prêchée par Mañjuśrī est justement la non-dualité:

„A mon avis, dit-il, sur quoi que ce soit, il ne peut y avoir ni parole, ni discours, ni déclaration, ni connaissance. Écarter les questions et les réponses, voilà comment entrer dans la doctrine de la non-dualité"[228].

Le silence mental est l'attitude du sage parce que, seul, il assure l'apaisement.

## Notes

1 Cf. A. Foucher, *Étude sur l'Iconographie bouddhique de l'Inde*, Paris, 1900–05, I, p. 114–120; II, p. 39–49. — M. Lalou, *Iconographie des étoffes peintes dans le Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*, Paris, 1930. — B. Bhattacharyya, *The Indian Buddhist Iconography*, 2e éd., Calcutta, 1950, p. 100–123.

2 *Sakkapañha* dans *Dīgha*, 11, p. 267. — Voir encore *Hôbôgirin*, p. 95 b; J. Hackin, Revue des Arts Asiatiques, X, 11, p. 65, pl. XVIII b.

3 Buddhaghosa dans sa *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī*, 11, p. 647, explique: *Pañcasikho ti pañcacūḷo pañcakuṇḍaliko. So kira . . . pañcacūḷakadārakakāle*, etc.

4 *Janavasabha*, dans *Dīgha*, 11, p. 211.

5 M. Lalou, *Iconographic*, p. 69–70.

6 Cf. A. Foucher, *Art gréco-bouddhique du Gandhāra*, Paris, 1905–18, I, p. 492, 496, 498; II, p. 27, 158.

7 Vers 78–80: cf. S. Lévi, *Le Catalogue géographique des Yakṣa dans la Mahāmāyūrī*, JA, 1915, p. 35 du tiré à part.

8 *Si yu ki*, T 2087, k. 4, p. 889 *b* 22.
9 A. Foucher, *Art g.-b.*, II, p. 376.
10 J. Ph. Vogel, *La sculpture de Mathurā*, Paris, 1930, p. 43–44.
11 A. Grünwedel, *Altbuddhistische Kultstätten in Chinesisch-Turkistan*, Berlin, 1912, p. 5–6.
12 É. Chavannes, *Mission archéologique dans la Chine septentrionale*, I, Paris, 1913, p. 322, 546, 562, 574, 579, 581.
13 P. Pelliot, *Les grottes de Touen-Houang*, Paris, 1921, VI, pl. 324; H. Fernald, *An Early Chinese Sculptured Stele of 575 A.D.*, Eastern Art, III, p. 73–111; A. Waley, *Catalogue of Paintings recovered from Tun-Huang by Sir Aurel Stein*, London, 1931, pl. 41 et 42, p. 91–95; W. P. Yetts, *The George Eumorjopoulos Collection: Buddhist Sculpture*, London, 1932, p. 26–28, 41–46; J. Le Roy Davidson, *Traces of Buddhist Evangelism in Early Chinese Art*, avec 7 iii., Artibus Asiae, XI, 1948, p. 251–265; *The Lotus Sūtra in Chinese Art*, Yale University, 1954, p. 32–36.
14 J. Le Roy Davidson, *The Origin and Early Use of the Ju-i*, Artibus Asiae, XIII, 1950, p. 239–249; E. Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China*, Leiden, 1959, p. 407. Mañjuśrī et Vimalakīrti étaient devenus des parangons de la „conversation épurée" (*ts'ing t'an* 淸談), alors à la mode en Chine.
15 Cf. *Histoire du bouddhisme indien*, Louvain, 1958, p. 778–779. — Le *Maitreyavyākaraṇa* de Gilgit vient d'être édité par N. Dutt, *Gilgit Manuscripts*, IV, Calcutta, 1959, p. 187–214.
16 M. Lalou, *Iconographie*, p. 11.
17 *Tch'ou san tsang ki tsi*, T 2145, k. 2, p. 6 *b* 11; k. 7, p. 49 *a* 18 (citant Tche Min-tou et Tao-ngan).
18 T 224, k. 1, p. 425 c 6, où Maitroya et Mañjuśrī sont mentionnés.
19 E. Conze, *The Literature on Perfect Wisdom*, The Middle Way, XXVII, 1952, p. 20. Voir aussi R. Hikata, *Suvikrāntavikrāmi edited*, Fukuoka, 1958, p. XXXXVI–LI.
20 *Pañcaviṃśatis.*, éd. N. Dutt, p. 5.10, 17.18; *Śatas.*, éd. P. Ghosa, p. 7.3, 55.13.
21 La section dite de Mañjuśrī est représentée par la *Suvikrāntavikrāmī* dont il existe trois traductions chinoises: celle de Mandrasena (T 232) du Fou-nan fut exécutée en 503 ou 506; celle de Saṃghavarman, également du Fou-nan (T 233), entre 506 et 520; celle de Hiuan-tsang (T 220, section 7), entre 660 et 663.
22 On lit par exemple dans A. Grünwedel: „Es scheint also fast als ob dieser Bodhisattva eine wirkliche historische Persönlichkeit gewesen sei" (*Mythologic des Buddhismus in Tibet und der Mongolei*, Leipzig, 1900, p. 134).
23 Voir en dernier lieu P. Demiéville, *La Yogācārabhūmi de Saṅgharakṣa*, BEFEO, XLIV, 1954, p. 381, n. 4.
24 Aṣṭasāhasrikā, p. 4: *Nāhaṃ taṃ dharmaṃ samanupaśyāmi yad uta bodhisativa iti. taṃ apy ahaṃ dharmaṃ na samanupaśyāmi yad uta prajñāpāramitā nāma. so 'haṃ bodhisattvaṃ vā bodhisattvadharmaṃ vā avindann anupalabhamāno 'samanupaśyan prajñāpāramitām apy avindann anupalabhamāno 'samanupaśyan katamaṃ bodhisattvaṃ katamasyāṃ prajñāpāramitāyām avavadiṣyāmy anuśāsiṣyāmi.*
25 Ibid., p. 7: *Etad eva kaukṛtyaṃ syāt yo 'haṃ vastv avindann anupalabhamāno 'samanupaśyan nāmadheyamātreṇāyavyayaṃ kuryāṃ yad uta bodhisattva iti.*
26 Ibid., p. 29: *Bodhisattva evānutpādaḥ, bodhisattvadharmā apy anutpādaḥ.*
27 *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā*, éd. N. Dutt, p. 99: *Nāmamātram idaṃ yad uta prajñāpāramitā iti bodhisattva iti ca, tad api ca bodhisattvanāma nādhyātmaṃ na bahirdhā nobhayam antareṇopalabhyate, tad yathāpi nāma sattvaḥ sattva iti cocyate, na ca kācit sattvopalabdhiḥ, yac ca tan nāma tat prajñaptimātraṃ prajñaptidharmaḥ prajñaptisat.*
28 Ibid., p. 121: *Tat cittam acittaṃ prakṛtiś cittasya prabhāsvarā.*
29 T 279, k. 79, p. 438 *b* 5–14.

30 *Prajñāpāramitā* T 221, k. 15, p. 101 *c*; 102 *a*; T 223, k. 19, p. 358 *c*, 359 *a*; T 220, k. 341, p. 752 *c*-753 *b*; k. 456, p. 302 *a*–302 *b*; k. 521, p. 666 *c*; *Mahāsaṃnipāta*, T 397, k. 10, p. 67 *a*. Mais il y a quelques divergences entre les sources: cf. L. de la Vallée Poussin, *Bodhisattva*, Hastings Encycl., II, p. 743 *b*–748 *b*.

31 *Bodhisattvabhūmi*, éd. U. Wogihara, p. 12.

32 Le *Śūraṃgamasamādhisūtra* (T 642, k. 2, p. 638 *c*-639 *b*) distingue quatre sortes de *vyākaraṇa* (cf. P. Demiéville, Le *Concile de Lhasa*, Paris, 1952, p. 141–142 n.), Celui qui est conféré dans la huitième terre à un Bodhisattva *avaivartika* et qui coïncide avec l'obtention de *l'anutpattikadharmakṣānti* est absolument définitif: voir *Lalitavistara*, p. 35, 1. 21; *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkara*, p. 20, 1. 15; 141, 1. 27; 166, 1. 12; *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, p. 266, 1. 1–2.

33 *Upadeśa* T 1509, k. 12, p. 146 *a* 28; k. 28, p. 264 *b* 4–7; k. 30, p. 283 *a* 29–*b* 3; 284 *a* 27; k. 34, p. 309 *b* 8; k. 38, p. 340 *a* 2; k. 74, p. 580 *a* 14–16.

34 *Mahāyānasaṃgraha*, tr. fr., p. 202–203.

35 *Upadeśa* T 1509, k. 29, p. 273 *b* 9–16.

36 *Pañcaviṃśatisāh.*, p. 217, 1. 17; *Śatasāh.*, p. 1458, I. 19: *Daśamyāṃ bodhisattvabhūman vartamāno bodhisattvo mahāsattvas tathāgata eveti vaktavyaḥ.*

37 *Pañcaviṃśatisāh.*, p. 62, I. 14–63, I. 5; *Śatasāh.*, p. 270, I. 9–271, I. 3: *Santi bodhisattvā mahāsattvā ekajātipratibaddhā ye prajñāpāramitāyāṃ caranta upāyahauśalyena catvāri dhyānāni samāpadyante ... śūnyatāsamādhiṃ samāpadyante, ānimittasamādhiṃ samāpadyante, apraṇihitasamādhiṃ samāpadyante. na ca teṣāṃ vaśena gacchanti saṃmukhībhūtāṃś ca buddhān bhagavata ārāgayitvā tatra brahmacaryaṃ caritvā punar eva tuṣitānāṃ devānāṃ sabhāgatāyai upapadyante. te tatra yāvadāyus tiṣṭhanti. te taira yāvadāyuḥ sthitvā ahīnendriyāḥ smṛtimantaḥ saṃprajānanto anekair devakoṭīniyutaśatasahasraiḥ parivṛtāḥ puraskṛtā ihopapattiṃ darśayitvā nānābuddhakṣetreṣv anuttarāṃ samyaksaṃbodhim abhisaṃbudhyante.*

38 On a beaucoup épilogué sur l'épithète *kumārabhūta* „devenu jeune homme", „toujours jeune" ou „prince royal". Dans l'esprit des textes, il s'agit d'une prérogative toute spirituelle. On trouve dans le *Mañjuśrīparinirvāṇasūtra* (T 463, p. 480 *c* 3, etc.) la variante *Fa-wang-iseu = dharmakumāra* „prince héritier de la Loi".

39 *Pañcaviṃśatisāh.*, p. 144, I. 8: *Yena samādhinā sarvasamādhīnāṃ gocaram anubhavaty ayam ucyate śūraṅgamo nāma samādhiḥ.*

40 T 463, p. 480 *c* 18–20.

41 Cf. W. Kirfel, *Die Kosmographie der Inder*, Leipzig, 1920, p. 180 sq.

42 *Dīrghāgama* T 1, k. 18, p. 114 *b*–*c*; T 23, k. 1, p. 277 *a*; T 24, k. 1, p. 310 *b*; T 25, k. 1, p. 365 *c*; *Madhyamāgama* T 26, k. 59, p. 799 *c*; *Saṃyuktāgama* T 99, k. 16, p. 111 *c*–112 *a*; *Aṅguttara* I, p. 227; *Cullaniddesa*, p. 135; *Mahāvyutpatti*, n° 3042–3044; *Lalitavistara*, p. 150; *Kośa* III, p. 170; *Pañjikā*, p. 52; *Upadeśa* dans *Traité de la Grande Vertu de Sagesse*, I, Louvain, 1944, p. 447 sq.

43 Lorsque les textes ont à énumérer les dix régions, ils séparent généralement les régions principales des régions secondaires. En pāli, l'ordre suivi est: 1. les quatre points cardinaux (*disā*), 2. le nadir et le zénith, 3. les quatre points intermédiaires (*anudisā*): cf. *Saṃyutta* I, p. 122, l. 2–3; III, p. 124, l. 2–3; *Aṅguttara* III, p. 368, l. 26–28; IV, p. 167, l. 1–9. — Le sanskrit adopte l'ordre suivant: 1. la quatre points cardinaux (*diś*), 2. les quatre points intermédiaires (*vidiś*), 3. le nadir et le zénith (*Pañcaviṃśatisāh.*, p. 6, l. 11–14; T 221, p. 1 *b* 12–13; T 222, p. 147 *b* 25–26; T 223, p. 217 *b* 18; *Śatasāh.*, p. 9, l. 14–10, l. 8; *Mahāvyut.*, n° 8326–8337; *Sukhāvatī*, § 12). Il est rare que les points intermédiaires soient intercalés entre les points cardinaux (*Saddharmapuṇḍ.*, p. 184–185; 243–244).

44 *Mahāvastu* I, p. 122, l. 3.

45 *Mahāvastu* I, p. 121, l. 11; *Upadeśa* T 1509, k. 50, p. 418 *c*; k. 92, p. 708 *b*.

46 *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa*, T 476, k. 3, p. 570 *a* 19–22.
47 *Pañcaviṃśatisāh.*, T 221, k. 19, p. 136 *a* 12; T 223, k. 26, p. 408 *b* 21; T 220, k. 476, p. 411 *c* 14; *Aṣṭadaśasāh.*, T 220, k. 535, p. 749 *c* 20.
48 *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa*, T 476, k. 1, p. 559 *a* 24–28.
T'oung Pao XLVIII
49 T 310, k. 60, p. 347 *b* 27–29.
50 Le *Śikṣāsamuccaya*, éd. C. Bendall, p. 13, 1. 18–14, 1, 12, cite la rédaction originale de ces neuf premières stances, sauf de la troisième et de la huitième que je supplée par le tibétain.

1. *yāvatī prathamā koṭiḥ saṃsārasyāntavarjitā,*
   *tāvat satvahitārthāya cariṣyāmy amitāṃ carim.*
2. *utpādayāma saṃbodhau cittaṃ [jagan]-nāthasya saṃmukham,*
   *nimantraye jagat sarvaṃ dāridyān mocitāsmi tat.*
3. de riṅ phan chad gal te yaṅ
   bdag gis ḥdod chags sems bskyed na
   phyogs beu dag na gaṅ bżugs paḥi
   saṅs rgyas thams cad bslus bar ḥgyur.
4. *vyāpādakhilacittaṃ vā īrṣyāmātsaryam eua vā,*
   *adyāgre na kariṣyāmi bodhiṃ prāpsyāmi yāvatā.*
5. *brahmacaryaṃ cariṣyāmi kāmāṃs tyakṣyāmi pāpakān,*
   *buddhānām anuśikṣiṣye śīlasaṃvarasaṃayame.*
6. *nāhaṃ tvaritarūpeṇa bodhiṃ prāptum ihotsahe,*
   *parāntakoṭiṃ sthāsyāmi satvasyaikasya kāraṇāt*
7. *kṣetraṃ viśodhayiṣyāmi aprameyam acintiyam,*
   *nāmadheyaṃ kariṣyāmi daśa diskṣu ca viśrutam.*
8. bdag gis bdag la luṅ bstan te
   saṅs rgyas ḥgyur bar dogs pa med
   bdag gi lha bsam rnam par dag
   bdag dbaṅ ḥdi na ḥdren pa rnams.
9. *kāyavākkarmaṇī cāhaṃ śodhayiṣyāmi sarvaśaḥ,*
   *śodhayiṣye manaskarma karma karttāsmi nāśubham.*

51 *Pañcaviṃśatisāh.*, p. 60–72; *Śatasāh.*, p. 266–290.
52 *Niyatāniyatagatimudrāvatāra* T 645, p. 699 *c* 10–11; T 646, p. 706 *b* 20–21; *Upadeśa* T 1509, k. 38, p. 342 *c* 3–6.
53 *Pañcaviṃśatisāh.*, p. 66, 1. 4–7; *Śatasāh.*, p. 192, 1. 10–14: *Santi bodhisattvā mahāsattvā ye prathamacittolpādenaivānuttarāṃ samyaksaṃbodhim abhisaṃbudhyante dharmacakraṃ pravartayanty aprameyāṇām asaṃkhyeyānāṃ sattvānāṃ cārthaṃ kṛtvā nirupadhiśeṣe nirvāṇadhātau parinirvānti teṣāṃ parinirvṛtānāṃ kalpaṃ vā kalpāvaśeṣaṃ vā saddharmas tiṣṭhāti.*
54 *Upadeśa* T 1509, k. 38, p. 342 *c* 21–24.
55 *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra*, éd. E. Waldschmidt, p. 210–212.
56 *Dīgha* I, p. 46: *Kāyassa bhedā uddhaṃ jīvitapariyādānā na dakkhinti devamanussā.*
57 *Suttanipāta*, v. 1074 sq.
58 *Vimalakīrtimirdeśa* T 476, k. 3, p. 571 *c* 20–25.
59 *Upadeśa* T 1509, k. 30, p. 278 *a* 10–17
60 *Śūraṃgamasamādhi* T 642, k. 1, p. 631 *a* 19–21.
61 *Ibid.*, k. 1, p. 631 *c* 25–26.
62 *Ibid.*, k. 2, p. 644 *a* 21–24.
63 *Ibid.* k. 2, p. 642 *b* 1–2.
64 *Upadeśa* T 1509, k. 10, p. 134 *b* 15–22.
65 *Pañcaviṃśatisāh.*, p. 17, 1. 18; *Śatasāh.*, p. 55, l. 13.

66 T 278, k.4, p. 418 *b* 19–23; T 279, k. 12, p. 58 *a* 19–23.
67 T 1191, k, 1, p. 835 *a* 22–24.
68 T 120, k. 4, p. 543 *b* 10; OKC 879, p. 212 *a* 8–213 *a* 2.
69 T 642, k. 2, p. 644 *a* 1–20; OKC 800, p. 333 *a* 4–334 *a* 5.
70 *Sin ti kouang king*, T 159, k. 3, p. 304 *b* 10; *Upadeśa* T 1509, k. 10, p. 134 *b* 19; k. 29, p. 273 *b* c; *Kou ts'ing leang tchouan* T 2098, k. 1, p. 1093 *a* 21.
71 *P'ou su yin lo king*, T 656, k. 4, p. 38 *c*–39 *b*.
72 Pour un Indien le „Mont des neiges" est bien l'Himālaya; pour un Chinois le *Siue chan* n'est pas localisé avec la même précision. Cf. P. Demiéville, Le *Concile de Lhasa*, Paris, 1952, p. 298, n. 2.
73 Sur le Gandhamādana, voir G. P. Malalasekera, *Dictionary of Pāli Proper Names*, I, London, 1937, p. 746–748; C. Akanuma, *Dictionnaire des noms propres du bouddhisme indien*, Nagoya, 1931, p. 194 *b*-195 *a*.
74 T 1, k. 30, p. 117 *a*. — Voir encore Ta leou t'an king, T 23, k. 1, p. 279 *a*; K'i che king T 24, k. 1, p. 313 *a–b*; K'i che yin pen king T 25, k. 1, p. 368 *b*; *Ekottara* T 125, k. 34, p. 736 *a*.
75 Sur le lac Anavatapta, où les quatre grands fleuves Gange, Indus, Oxus et Tarim prenaient leur source, voir Malalasekera, *o.c.*, I, p. 96–99; Akanuma, p. 45; *Traité de la Grande Vertu de Sagesse*, Louvain, 1944, p. 385, 450; M. Hofinger, *Le Congrès du Lac Anavatapta*, Louvain, 1954, p. 177–180 n.
76 Satyaka-Nirgranthīputra (en pāli, Saccaka-Nigaṇṭhaputta): 1⁰ Dans les textes du Petit Véhicule: *Cūlasaccakasutta* (*Majjhima* I, p. 227–237; *Saṃyukta* T 99, k. 5, p. 35 *a* 37 *b*; *Ekottara* T 125, k. 30, p. 715 *a*-717 *b*), — *Mahāsaccakasutta* (*Majjhima* I, p. 237–251). — *Commentaires du Majjhima* (II, p. 268) et des *Jātaka* (III, p. 1 sq). — *Fa kiu p'i yu king* T 211, k. 3, p. 594 *c* sq.). — *Vibhāṣā* T 1545, k. 8, p. 37 *c* 14.
2⁰ Dans les textes du Grand Véhicule: *Bodhisattvagocaropāyaviṣayavikurvaṇanirdeśa* (T 271, 272; OKC 813). — *Upadeśa* T 1509, k. 1, p. 61 *b* 21; k. 26, p. 251 *c* 10; k. 90, p. 699 *a* 9.
77 *Sur la formation du Mahāyāna*, Asiatica (Festschrift F. Weller), Leipzig, 1954, p. 381–386.
78 *Upadeśa* T 1509, k. 15, p. 173 *c* (cf. *Traitd* II, p. 940–942); *Tarkajvāla* Mdo XIX, p. 180 *a* 2–4; *Abhisamayālaṃkārāloka*, éd. U. Wogihara, p. 5; Bu-ston, *History of Buddhism*, tr. E. Obermiller, II, p. 101, Heidelberg, 1932; Tāranātha, *Geschichte des Buddhismus*, üb. von A. Schiefner, St. Petersburg, 1869, p. 62–63.
79 *Upadeśa* T 1509, k. 100, p. 756 *b* 5–10.
80 *Houa yen king tchouan ki* T 2073, k. 1, p. 153 *b* 17–23.
81 *Upadeśa* T 1509, k. 67, p. 531 *b*. — Sur l'itinéraire de la Prajñā, cf. *Traité* I, p. 25–26 en note.
82 Cf. M. Walleser, *The Life of Nāgārjuna from Tibetan and Chinese Sources*, Hirth Anniversary Volume, London, 1922, p. 421–455. — Autres références dans *Traité* I, p. X–XIV.
83 *Long chou p'ou sa tchouan* T 2047, p. 184 *c*.
84 *Harṣacarita* de Bāṇa, éd. K. Parab, Bombay, 1945, p. 250; *Fan yi ming yi tsi* de Fa-yun (1088–1158), T 2131, k. I, p. 1065 *c*; Bu-ston II, p. 124; Tāranātha, p. 70–71.
85 *Aṣṭasāh.*, éd. R. Mitra, p. 507; *Pañcaviṃśatisāh.*, T 223, k. 27, p. 420 *c*; *Śainsāh.*, T 220, k. 399, p. 1066 *a*; *Upadeśa* T 1509, k. 98, p. 744 *a*.
86 Tāranātha, p. 58.
87 Bu-ston II, p. 124; Tāranātha, p. 70–71.
88 Tāranātha, p. 71.
89 *Histoire du bouddhisme indien*, p. 179–181.
90 *Aṣṭasāh.*, p. 462.
91 *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa* T 476, k. 3, p. 572 *a* 7–10.

92 *Saddharmapuṇḍ.*, p. 390–391.
93 La critique moderne est d'un avis diamétralement opposé: „The Mahāyānasūtra have all been slowly built up over a long period": cf. E. Conze, *The Composition of the Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, BSOAS, XIV, 1952, p. 251–252; *The Literature on Perfect Wisdom*, The Middle Way, XXVII, 1952, p. 20–23; R. Hikata, *Suvikrānta . . . ed.*, Fukuoka, 1958, p. XXVIII–XXXV.
94 *Tch'ou san tsang ki tsi*, T 2145, k. 7, p. 47 *b* 15; p. 8, p. 55 *b* 16.
95 *Ibidem*, k. 8, p. 56 *a* 23.
96 *Ibidem*, k. 7, p. 47 *c*–48 *b*. Mais la date du départ de Tchou Che-hing, 260, est donnée aussi comme celle de son ordination (cf. E. Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China*, Leiden, 1959, p. 340, n. 183). Le texte sanskrit de la *Pañcav.* Trouvé au Khotan par Tchou Che-hing fut rapporté en Chine par son disciple Fou-jo-t'an 弗若檀 (Puṇyadharma ?) et traduit en chinois, à Lo-yang, en 291, par Mokṣala (T 221).
97 Voir, dans l'ordre chronologique, les classements proposés tour ā tour: I. par Tao-ngan 道安 et Tche Tao-lin 支道林 au IV[e] siècle (T 2145, k. 7, p. 47 *b* 15–16; k. 8, p. 55–56); 2. par Kumārajīva (402–404) dans les notes incorporées à sa traduction de *l'Upadeśa* (T 1509, k. 67, p. 529 *b* 22–23; k. 79, p. 620 *a* 12); 3. par Seng-jouei 僧叡, disciple de Kumārajīva (T 2145, k. 8, p. 55 *a* 8–9); 4. par la préface à T 245 (p. 825 *b* 21–23); 5, par le *Kin kang sien louen* faussement attribué à Vasubandhu (T 1512, k. 1, p. 798 *a*).
98 H. Lüders, *List of Brāhmī Inscriptions*, s.v. Dhenukākaṭa et sq., p. 206.
99 Bu-ston II, p. 125; Tāranātha, p. 71.
100 *Si yu ki* T 2087, k. 10, p. 930 *c*. — *Histoire du bouddhisme indien*, p. 377–380.
101 *Gaṇḍavyūha*, èd. D. T. Suzuki, p. 50–51.
102 *Saddharmapuṇḍ.*, p. 261.
103 *Ibidem*, p. 265–266.
104 P. Demiéville, *La Yogācārabhūmi*, p. 376–387.
105 *Si yu ki* T 2087, k. 10, p. 930 *b*–*c*.
106 P. Demiéville, *Le Concile*, p. 298, n. 2. T'oung Pao XLVIII
107 *Fa yuan tchou lin* T 2122, k. 12, p. 379 *a*; k. 100, p. 1028 *c*.
108 Les légendes concernant Aśoka et le Khotan remonteraient sensiblement à la même date: cf; *Histoire du bouddhisme indien*, p. 281–282.
109 Dans les sources étudiées par F. W. Thomas, Gośṛṅga est rendu en tibétain par Glaṅ ru, dont le nom survit dans celui du village actuel de Lānghru.
110 Sur tous ces termes, voir maintenant P. Pelliot, *Notes on Marco Polo*, I, Paris, 1959, p. 196–214.
111 Comme presque tous les autres, ce Purāṇa est de date indéterminée.
112 Il s'agit de la *Vaṃśāvalī* de tendance bouddhiste écrite vers 1800 à Patan par un moine du Mahābodhivihāra, librement traduite en anglais par les pandits de la British Residency et éditée par D. Wright, *History of Nepal translated from the Parbatiya*, Cambridge, 1877. Sur les *Vaṃśāvalī* népalaises, voir L. Petech, *Medieval History of Nepal*, Rome, 1958, p. 5–10.
113 Éd. Haraprasad Sastri, *Bibl. Ind.*, 1900, p. 166 sq.
114 Le Mont Śīrṣa „Tète" en Mahācīna, d'aprés le *Svayambhūpurāṇa* et les „Vingt-cinq stances pour invoquer la faveur des divinités du Népal", petit traité signalé par E. Burnouf, *Le Lotus de la Bonne Loi*, Paris, 1852, p. 502. Ce Mont Śīrṣa, pour Pañcaśīrṣa, est évidemment le Wou-t'ai chan du Chan-si.
115 *Svayambhūp.*, p. 174.
116 Ibid., p. 8–9.
117 Le symbole inanimé de Mañjuśrī, — symbole désigné sous le nom de *vītarāga* „exempt de passion" —, était un caurī ou chasse-mouche fait avec la queue (*pucchā*) d'un Yak, symbole tout à fait himâlayen (cf. *Burnouf, l.c.*, p. 501).

118 D. Wright, *o.c.*, p. 79.
119 Publiées par R. Gnoli, *Nepalese Inscriptions in Gupta Characters*, Rome, 1956.
120 Fa-ṭsang, dans T 2098, k. I, p. 1093 *a*.
121 P. Demiéville, *Le Concile*, p. 376–377.
122 Dans les notes qui suivent, je m'y réfère sous les sigles *A*. *B* et *C* respectivement.
123 Les Pei Ts'i (550–577) de la famille Kao 高, capitale Ye 鄴, furent d'ardents bouddhistes. Leur fondateur Kao Yang 高洋 (550–559) reçut l'ordination des Bodhisattva lors de son avènement (Mochizuki, *Chronologie*, p. 131). *A* reviendra dans un instant sur le rôle joué par cette dynastie au Wou-t'ai.
124 Sur le sacrifice du „troisième prince" qui brūla son corps en offrande (pratique de „dévouement" courante en Chine), voir encore *B*, p. 1094 *c* 14–16; *C*, p. 1107 *b* 15 (qui renvoie au précédent). Mais la date fait difficulté. M. Demiéville que j'ai consulté, me communique: „D'après Fa-tsang (*A*, p. 156 *c* 18), c'était „au début" (c'est-à-dire la première année) de l'ère Ta-houo des Pei Ts'i. Mais il n'y a pas d'ère de ce nom sous les Pei Ts'i. En outre, comme *A* le dit plus bas (p. 156 *c* 26), l'empereur régnant était Kao-tsou 高祖, et il n'y a, sauf erreur, pointd'empereur de ce nom sous les Pei Ts'i. Il s'agit peut-être de l'empereur Kao-tsou Hiao-wen Hong 高祖孝文宏 des Pei Wei 北魏 sous lesquels il y eut une ère T'ai-houo 太和, 477–499 [cf. A. C. Moule, *The Rulers of China, Chronological Tables*, Londres, 1957, p. 29]. J'ai regardé dans l'histoire des „Dynasties du nord" (*Pei che*) les biographies des fils de Hiano-wen ti des Wei et du premier empereur des Pei Ts'i; je n'y ai trouvé aucune allusion à cette histoire. Mais celle-ci était très populaire au Wou-t'ai."
125 Sur l'eunuque, voir encore *B*, p. 1094 *c* 16–22.
126 Houei-yuan, de la dynastie des Souei (581–617), naquit à Touen-houang en 523. Il résida à Ye où, en 578, il résista ouvertement à l'empereur Wou des Pei Tcheou qui voulait proscrire le bouddhisme. L'empereur des Souei fonda pour lui le monastère du Tsing-ying sseu où il résida dès 587. Il y eut de nombreux disciples et s'y éteignit en 592. Houei-yuan fut un polygraphe qui nous a laissé un grand ouvrage sur le Mahāyāna (T 1851) et des commentaires sur le *Sukhāvatīvyūha* (T 1745 et 1749), le *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa* (T 1776), le *Sūtra de l'Invitation au bain* (T 1793) et le *Śraddhotpāda* (T 1843), ce dernier d'authenticité discutée. Pour autant que je sache, il ne reste pas de traces de son commentaire inachevé sur l'*Avataṃsaka*.
127 Il s'agit du chapitre intitulé en sanskrit *Vajradhvajapariṇāmanā*, ch. XXI dans la version chinoise de Buddhabhadra (T 278, k. 14, p. 488 *a*), ch. XXV dans la version chinoise de Śikṣānanda (T 279, k. 23, p. 124 *a*), ch. XXX dans la version tibétaine (OKC 761, vol. *ri*, p. 134 *b*).
128 Tout le monde n'a pas la virilité de l'eunuque; mais Fa-tsang aurait pu mentionner l'activité considérable déployée par la Chine des T'ang dans l'exégèse de l'*Avaṃsaka*. On doit à Fa-tsang lui-même, à son prédécesseur Tche-yen 智嚴 (602–668) et à son successeur Tch'eng-kouan 澄觀 (737–820 ou 838) sept commentaires sur l'*Avataṃsaka* (T 1732–1738), dont l'un dépasse 90 rouleaux. Li T'ong-hiuan 李通玄 mit une dizaine d'années (719–729) à rédiger son *Nouveau Traité sur l'Avataṃsaka* (T 1739) en 40 rouleaux. La secte T'ien-t'ai également s'intéressa au même sujet en la personne de Tehan-jan 湛然 (711–782), auteur de T 1742. A elle seule, l'exégèse de l'*Avataṃsaka* occupe deux volumes entiers de l'édition de Taishō.
129 On reviendra plus loin sur ce texte capital dans l'histoire du Wou-t'ai et de la secte Houa-yen.
130 Cf. *C*, p. 1107 *a* 21.
131 Cf. *B*, p. 1093 *b* 14–15. Le mont Heng est une de cinq pics sacrés de la Chine, celui du Nord.
132 Cf. *B*, p. 1093 *b* 22 et *c* 2; *C*, p. 1105 *b* 29.

133 Cf. *B*, p. 1094 *a* 19.

134 Concernant le même monument, on lit dans *B*, p. 1094 *n* 25: „Le Ta-fou-t'ou sseu 大孚圖寺 a été fondé par Wen-ti 文帝 des Yuan Wei [Kao-tsou Hiao-wen Hong (471–499) des Pei Wei]. Autrefois cet empereur s'y était arrêté et avait organisé des cérémonies religieuses. Ensuite, dans une sainte pensée, il avait établi ce monastère. Le caractère *jou* signifie „foi". On explique cela en disant que l'empereur, ayant rencontré là des choses extraordinaires, avait augmenté sa foi".

*C*, p. 1103 *c* 8 sq., cite un passage du *Kan t'ong lou* (T 2107, p. 437 *a* 21) où le maitre du vinaya, Tao-siuan 道宣 (596–667), pose la question suivante: „Actuellement au Wout'ai chan, à trente lis au sud-est de la terrasse centrale, il y a le Ta-fou-ling-tsieou sseu 大孚靈鷲寺 ... Certains (cf. *A*) disent qu'il a été fondé par Ming 明 des Han 漢 [Ming ti (58–75) des Han postérieurs]; d'autres (cf.*B*) disent qu'il a été fondé par Hiao-wen (471–499) des Wei. Comment expliquer cette contradiction? — Réponse: Les deux empereurs, autrefois, ont l'un et l'autre érigé un monastère en cet endroit. Et le roi A-yu 阿育 [Aśoka, roi indien, ca 272–236 a.C.], lui aussi, a construit un stūpa en cet endroit. Naguère, au temps de Mou-wang 穆王 des Tcheou [X[a] s.a.C.], la Loi du Buddha existait déjà. Cette montagne est spirituelle et extraordinaire; elle est habitée par Mañju. Au début du règne de Ming des Han, Mo-t'eng 摩騰 (Kāśyapa Mātaṅga), par son œil divin, avait aperçu ce stūpa [d'Aśoka] et il avait conseillé de construire des monastères [à proximité]. Dans le libellé Ta-fou-ling-tsieou, le caractère *fou* signifie „foi": l'empereur [Ming] avait foi dans les principes bouddhiques; il érigea un monastère pour exhorter les hommes; c'est pourquoi on dit *Ta jou*. En outre, la configuration de la montagne est pareille à la sainte montagne du Gṛdhraparvata „Mont du vautour" en Inḍe: c'est pourquoi on l'appelle *Ling-tsieou*."

Ce tissu d'anachronismes peut être utilisé comme base de datation. En effet les légendes rapportées ici ne se sont formées qu'aux IV[a] et V[a] siècles de notre ère, ce qui exclut toute intervention d'Aśoka (272–236 a.C.) et de Ming-ti (58–75 p. C.) dans l'histoire du Wou-t'ai chan.

1 C'est en 306 que la traduction des cinq premiers chapitres de l'*Aśokarājāvadāna* (T 2042) par Ngan Fa-k'in (cf. T 2149, k. 2, p. 236 *a* 12) apprit aux Chinois qu'Aśoka avait été un roi cakravartin „à quatre parts" (*caturbhāga-cakravartin*) et qu'il avait construit 84.000 stūpa dans son empire (cf. *Divyāvadāna*, p. 368, l. 26–28). Le sens de l'épithète prête à discussion (cf. Kośa III, p. 197, n. 3): il peut s'agir d'un roi régnant sur un continent seulement, ou sur les quatre continents (*cāturdvipaka* dans la Bodhisattvabhūmi, p. 334, 1, 12; *caturdvīpeśvara* dans le Śikṣāsamuccaya, p. 175, l. 10). Quoi qu'il en soit, les Chinois crurent qu'Aśoka avait régné sur leur empire et réparti sur leur sol les reliques du Buddha. Aussi se mirent-ils à la recherche des „reliques d'Aśoka" dans le double but d'appuyer la propagande bouddhique en Chine et de flatter la Cour par des trouvailles de bon augure pour les princes. Dans son admirable ouvrage *The Buddhist Conquest of China*, Leiden, 1959, p. 277–280, M. E. Zürcher a signalé neuf découvertes de ce genre opérées au cours du IV[e] siècle: il s'agit de monastères, de stūpa et de statues que l'on attribuait à Aśoka.

Dans le même état d'esprit, dés le début du V[e] siècle, plusieurs montagnes de Chine reçurent le nom de *Ling-tsieou chan* en souvenir du et par assimilation au Gṛdhrakūṭa-parvata de Rājagṛha (Zürcher, *o.l.*, p. 208; 394, n. 136 et 137).

2 H. Maspero a montré depuis longtemps (BEFEO, X, 1910, p. 95–130) que le songe et l'ambassade de l'empereur Ming est une fable qui s'est formée dans les cercles bouddhiques de Lo-yang au III[e] siècle de notre ère. C'est à la fin du V[e] siècle seulement que Kāśyapa Mātaṅga est rangé parmi les membres de cette prétendue ambassade.

Il est donc évident que le plus ancien monument bouddhique du Wou-t'ai, à savoir le *Ta Feou-t'ou Ling-tsieou sseu* n'a pu être fondé qu'au V[e] siècle de notre ère et que seule la tradition qui attribue sa fondation à Hiao-wen Hong des Pei Wei présente quelque vraisemblance historique.

Quant au nom du monument, il demeure d'interprétation incertaine, les caractères *jeou-t'ou* 浮圖 pouvant signifier tantót *buddha* et tantôt *stūpa* (Mochizuki, p. 4482 *c*).

135 Cf. *B*, p. 1094 *a* 28.

136 Cf. *B*, p. 1095 *c* l; *C*, p. 1103 *c* 11.

137 Voir ci-dessus, n. 123.

138 Nouvel anachronisme: comme on le verra plus loin, c'est seulement á partir du VII[e] siècle que les Indiens ou, plus précisément, les habitants de la Sérinde (西域 crurent à la présence de Mañjuśrī en Chine. Le premier pélerin connu fut Buddhapālita qui visita le Wou-t'ai en 676.

139 Cf. *B*, p. 1093 *b* 13.

140 Sous l'empereur Sseu-ma Hiao-houai Tch'e 司馬孝懷熾, qui régna à Lo-yang de 307 à 311 (A. C. Moule, *Rulers of China*, p. 17).

141 *Chouei king tchou* de Li Tao-yuan, mort en 527, éd. Wang Sien-k'ien, 1892, XI, 31 *a-b; T'ai p'ing yu lan*, éd. Sseu pou ts'ong k'an, XLV, 4 *a*.

142 Une peinture murale représentant le Wou-t'ai a été découverte dans la grotte 117 de Touen-houang, grotte aménagée entre 980 et 995 (cf. P. Demiéville, *Le Concile*, p. 377; Basil Gray, *Buddhist Cave Paintings at Tun-huang*, Londres, 1959, p. 74–75 et pl. 67 B). Sur les plans ou peintures qui étaient fournis aux pèlerins, cf. E. O. Reischauer, *Ennin's Diary*, New York, 1995, p. 269–270.

143 *Tch'ou san tsang ki tsi* T 2145, k. 9, p. 62 *a–c*.

144 T 2122, k. 89, p. 944 *c*.

145 S. Lévi et É. Chavannes, *Les seize Arhat Protecteurs de la Loi*, JA, 1916, p. 40–45 du tiré à part; P. Pelliot, *Meou-tseu ou les doutes levés*, TP, XIX, 1920, p. 346.

146 Sur Houei-yuan, cf. E. Zürcher, *o.l.*, p. 204–262.

147 T 2059, k. 6, p. 359 *b* 15–18; T 2145, k. 15. p. 110 *a* 14–17 (dans cette dernière source, le nom de Fa-ling est omis).

148 T 2059, k. 2, p. 335 *c* 3–6; T 2145, k, 14, p. 104 *a* 19–20.

149 Tong Tsin de la famille Sseu-ma qui régnèrent à Kien-k'ang (Nankin) de 317 à 420 (cf. Moule, p. 18–19).

150 Heou Ts'in de la famille Yao qui régnèrent à Tch'ang-ngan de 384 à 417. Le souverain dont il est question ici est Yao Hing 姚興 (394–416).

151 Préface au T 1428, p. 567 *a* 20–*b* 2.

152 Ci-dessus, note 96.

153 *Tch'ou san tsang ki tsi*, T 2145, k. 48, p. 48 *a* 1–3.

154 *Fa hien tchouan* T 2085, p. 857 *b*.

155 Voir la biographie de Buddhayaśas dans *Kao seng tchouan* T 2059, k. 2, p. 333 *c* 15–334 *b* 25.

156 *P'an* 槃 T 2073 est une faute pour *kia* 迦; cf. T 2034, p. 103 *a* 14, T 2060, p. 434 *b* 16. Il s'agit du petit royaume de Karghalik situé à l'ouest du Khotan. Le *Mahāsaṃipāta* T'oung Pao XLVIII l'appelle Tchö-kiu-kia 遮居迦, en tibétain *Cu gon* [*pan*] ou *Ca ko ka* (T 397, k. 55, p. 367 *c* 25). Song Yun qui le visita en 519 l'appelle Tchou-kiu-po 朱駒波 (T 2092, k. 5, p. 1019 *a* 23). Jinagupta qui s'y rendit vers 557 le nomme Tchö-kiu-kia 遮拘迦 (T 2034, k. 12, p. 103 *a* 14; T 2060, k. 2, p. 434 *b* 15; Ē. Chavannes, *Jinagupta*, T'oung Pao VI, 1905, p. 353–354). Hiuan-tsang qui y passa à son retour des Indes vers 644 le nomme Tcho-kiu-kia 斫句迦 (T 2087, k. 12, p. 942 *c* 24) et confirme en partic les renseignements déjà donnés ici: „En ce pays, les textes des Mahāyānasūtra sont extrêmement nombreux, plus nombreux que dans les autres pays où la Loi du Buddha a pénétré. Les exemplaires comptent

chacun dix myriades de *gāthā*, et il y en a plus de dix. Des recensions dégradées provenant de ces [recensions longues] ont une diffusion très large". Karghalik est encore désigné par d'autres noms dans les livres historiques chinois: cf, É. Chavannes, *Voyage de Song Yun*, BEFEO, III, 1903, p. 19, n. 4 du tiré à part.

157 Tuṣāra est une déformation courante pour Tukhāra (Tocharoi et Yue-tche): cf. P. Pelliot, *Tokharien et Koutchéen*, JA, 1934, I, p. 34–36. Sous la dynastie des Kuṣāṇa, le puissant Kaniṣka favorisa le bouddhisme et, selon une tradition recueillie au Kaśmīr par Hiuan-tsang (T 2087, k. 3, p. 887 *a*), fit procéder à une revision complète du Tripiṭaka qu'il fit graver sur des plaques de cuivre (cf. *Histoire du bouddhisme indien*, p. 648). Est-ce de cette édition qu'il s'agit ici?

158 T 2073, k. I, p. 153 *b* 23-*c* 8.

159 Biographie et dates dans le *Siu kao seng tchouan*, T 2060, k. 2, p. 433 *b* sq. (traduit par É. Chavannes, T'oung Pao, VI, 1905, p. 336–356); *K'ai yuan che kiao mou lou* T 2154, k. 7, p. 549 *b*; Mochizuki, s.v. *Jñanagupta*, p. 2172.

160 Cf. *Siu kao seng tchouan* T 2060, k. 2, p. 434 *b* 15–23.

161 T 2074, p. 173 *c* 3–16.

162 *Fa hien tchouan* T 2085, p. 857 *a*.

163 *Kao seng tchouan* T 2059, k. 3, p. 339 *b*. — Cf. P. Demiéville, *La Yogācārabhūmi*, p. 378, n. 2.

164 *Kao seng tchouan* T 2059, k. 2, p. 334 *c* 23–24.

165 Cf. Mochizuki, *Chron.*, p. 102.

166 C'est la date adoptée par P. Demiéville dans l'*Inde Classique*, II, p. 417.

167 Sur les t'an-yue (*dānapati*), cf. J. Gernet, *Les Aspects économiques du bouddhisme*, Saigon, 1956, p. 43, 102.

168 *Tch'ou san tsang ki tsi* T 2145, k. 9, p. 61 *a* 1–8; Postface de T 278, k. 60, p. 788 *b* 3–9.

169 Houei-yen (363–443), originaire de Yu-tcheou 豫州 au Hou-pei; il fut disciple de Kumārajīva, puis travailla, à Nankin, à l'édition du Sud du *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* (T 375).

170 Houei-yi, religieux attaché au monastère du Jetavana de Nankin; il fut aussi en relations avec le kaśmīrien Guṇavarman qui arriva à Nankin en 431 (*Kao seng tchouan* T 2059, k. 3, p. 341 *a* 20).

171 *Tch'ou san tsang ki tsi* T 2145, k. 14, p. 104 *a* 22–24; *Kao seng tchouan* T 2059, k. 2, p. 335 *c* 7–9.

172 T 2074, p. 173 *c* 17–22.

173 Voir la notice critique consacrée à Paramārtha par P. Demiéville, *Sur l'authenticité du Ta tch'eng k'i sin louen*, Bulletin de la Maison Franco-Japonaise, II, 1929, p. 15–28.

174 *Houa yen king tchouan ki*, T 2073, k. 1, p. 153 *a* 24–*b* 9.

175 Śikṣānanda était né au Khotan, en 652. Il arriva à Lo-yang en 695 et retourna au Khotan en 704. En 707 ou 708, il fut rappelé à la cour par un décret impérial: il y fut reçu avec les plus grands honneurs, mais, fort peu de temps après, il tomba malade et mourut, en 710, âgé de 59 ans. Cf. *Kan ying tchouan* T 2074, k. 4, p. 176 *b* 4; *K'ai yuan che kiao mou lou* T 2154, k. 9, p. 566 *a* 13; *Tcheng yuan sin ting che kiao mou lou* T 2157, k. 13, p. 866 *b* 16; *Song kao seng tchouan* T 2061, k.2, p. 718 *c* 19; *Fo tsou t'ong ki*, T 2035, k. 39, p. 370 *b* 6.

176 Du 16 octobre 690 au 2 mars 705 le titre de la dynastie (*kouo-hao*) des T'ang fut changé en Tcheou (cf. Moule, *Rulers of China*, p. 56).

177 L'impératrice Wou Tsö-t'ien 武則天 ou Wou Heou 武后 qui, en 684, avait déposé son fils, l'empereur Tchong-tsong, puis avait assumé en 690 le pouvoir impérial en titre. Tchong-tsong ne remonta sur le trône qu'en 705.

178 La version de Buddhabhadra (T 278) est parfois appelée *Ts'i tch'ou pa houei* 七處

八會 „Sept lieux et huit assemblées" parce que le Buddha y prêche l'*Avataṃsaka* à huit assemblées réunies en sept endroits différents. La version de Śikṣānanda (T 279) divise en deux la sixième assemblée de la version précédente et obtient ainsi neuf assemblées au lieu de huit: c'est pourquoi on l'appelle *Ts'i tch'ou kieou houei* 七處九會 „Sept lieux et neuf assemblées"; cf. *Houa yen king tchouan ki* T 2073, k. 1, p. 153 *c* 11–12.

179 Celle-ci est conservée: T 279, k. 1, p. 1 *a*.

180 Bodhiruci, primitivement Dharmaruci, naquit en 572 dans une famille brâhmanique de l'Inde du sud. Il se convertit au bouddhisme en 631 et arriva à Tch'ang-ngan en 693. Il travailla à Lo-yang de 693 à 706, puis à Tch'ang-ngan de 706 à 713. Il mourut à Lo-yang en 727, âgé de 156 ans (sic). Voir sa biographie dans *K'ai yuan che kino mou lou* T 2154, k. 9, p. 570 *a*–571 *a*; *Song kao seng tchouan* T 2061, k. 3, p. 720 *b*–*c*.

181 En 695, Yi-tsing venait de regagner la Chine après un voyage aux Indes qui s'était prolongé durant 25 ans (671–695). L'impératrice alla l'accueillir en personne à son retour et l'établit par décret dans le Fo-cheou-ki sseu dont il est question ici. Yi-tsing travailla d'abord avec Śikṣānanda; puis, à partir de la période *kicou-che* (700–701), il se consacra seul à ses traductions: cf. *Song kao seng tchouan* T 2061, k. 1, p. 710 *b* 15–23.

182 Fou-li était un chinois originaire de King-tch'ao. Il travailla à Tch'ang-ngan et à Lo-yang de 681 à 699 environ. Il s'était rendu célèbre par son *Che men pien ho louen* (T 2111), publié en 681, où il discutait dix points douteux soulevés en matière d'exégèse bouddhique par le maître du prince héritier K'iuan Wou-eul 權無二 sous le titre de *Che tien ki yi* 釋典稽疑 „Examen des doutes concernant les livres bouddhiques": cf. *K'ai yuan che kiao mou lou* T 2154, k. 9, p. 564 *b*; *Song kao seng tchouan* T 2061, k. 17 p. 812 *c*.

183 Fa-tsang, l'auteur de la présente notice. Voir ci-dessus, section VIII, au début.

184 *Houa yen king tchouan ki* de Fa-tsang, T 2073, k. 1, p. 155 *a* 10–19.

185 Cf. J. W. de Jong, *L'Épisode d'Asita dans le Lalitavistara*, Asiatica (Festschrift F. Weller), Leipzig, 1954, p. 312 en note.

186 *Spaṇ-ri* signifie bien „a grassy hill" (cf. Jāschke, *Dictionary*, p. 329 *b*), et l'équivalence *spaṅ* = *śādvala* est attestée (cf. J. Nobel, *Wörterbuch num Suvarṇaprabhāsa*, Leiden, 1950, p. 131).

187 Lacune à combler puisqu'il s'agit d'une „région intermédiaire" (*phyogs mtshams logs* = *vidiś*).

188 Voir ei-dessus, note 42.

189 Cf. *Mahāvyutpatti* n⁰ 1908 et 214; Nobel, *Wörterbuch* . . ., p. 25.

190 Par example Kirfel, *Kosmographie der Inder*, p. 95 et suiv., 218 et suiv.

191 Voir ci-dessus, note 128.

192 T 2125, k. 3, p. 224 *c* 15–17. Cf. J. Takakusu, *A Record of the Buddhist Religion*, Oxford, 1896, p. 136.

193 Nom d'une province qui fut constituée par Chouen 舜 dans le Chan-si actuel et englobait le Wou-t'ai chan.

194 T 2125, k. 4, p. 228 *b* 14; l.c., p. 169.

195 T 1185 A, p. 791 c 11–14; T 1185 B, p. 798 *a* 26–*b* 2.

196 *K'ai yuan che kiao mou lou* T 2154, k. 9, p. 569 *c* 7. Voir aussi *Sin kou kin yī king t'ou ki* T 2152, p. 371 *c* 20.

197 Édité en appendice dans K. P. Jayaswal, *Imperial History of India*, Lahore, 1934, p. 41, l. 17.18.

198 Voir ci-dessus, note 8.

199 Cf. S. Lévi, *Le Catalogue géographique des Yakṣa*, JA, 1915, p. 85 du tiré à part.

200 T 967, p. 349 *b* 2–*c* 5.

201 Dhāraṇī ayant pour effet de „purifier toutes les destinées mauvaises" (*sarvadurgatipariśodhanī*). Nous en avons huit traductions chinoises (T 967 à 974), deux traductions tibétaines (OKC 198, 609) et un commentaire chinois par Fa-tch'ong (T 1803).
202 Il s'agit de l'empereur Kao-tsong 高宗 qui régna de 649 à 683.
203 Cf. R. des Rotours, *Traité des jonctionnaires*, Leyde, 1948, p. 414.
204 Ce passage n'est pas clair. Il y eut en fait deux traductions: d'abord celle de Tou Hing-k'ai (T 968) terminée le 5[e] jour du premier mois de la quatrième année de la période *yi-fong* 儀鳳, 20 février 679 (cf. *K'ai yuan che kiao mou lou*, T 2154, k. 9, p. 564 *a* 23); ensuite, celle du moine de l'Inde Centrale Divākara (T 969) datée du 22[e] jour du 5[e] mois de la première année *yong-chouen* 永淳, 2 juill et 682 (cf. *K'ai yuan che kiao mou lou, T* 2154, k. 9, p. 564 *a* I). L'empereur était mécontent de la première traduction parce que Tou Hing-k'ai, un chinois de Tch'ang-ngan qui connaissait le sanskrit, s'était interdit d'employer les caractères frappés de tabou.
205 Ce fut la troisièma en ordre chronologique (T 967).
206 *Siu t' ou ki* T 2152, p. 369 *a*; *K'ai yuan che kiao mou lou*, T 2154, k. 9, p. 565 *a*.
207 *Song kao seng tchouan* T 2061, k. 2, p. *717 c*.
208 *Kouang ts'ing leang tchouan* T 2099, k. 2, p. IIII *a–b*, section intitulée: „Entrée de Buddhapālita dans la Grotte de diamant". Cette grotte est également signalée dans le *Kou ts'ing leang tchouan* de Fa-tsang (T 2098, k. 1, p. 1095 *a* 1 et suiv.), mais Fa-tsang († 712) ne mentionne pas l'ascension de Buddhapālita. Ce silence est essez troublant.
209 Cf. P. Pelliot, *Une bibliothèque médiévale retrouvde au Kan-sou*, BEFEO, VIII, 1908, p. 504.
210 Manuscrit de Touenhouang reproduit dans Tsukamoto Zenryū, *Chinese Buddhism in the Middle Period of the T'ang Dynasiy*, Mem. Tōhō Bunka Gakuin, IV, Kyōto, 1933, 2.
211 P. Demiéville, *La musique čame au Japon*, dans Études Asiatiques, Paris 1925, T. 1, p. 208–213.
212 Cf. Chou Yi-liang, *Tantrism in China*, HJAS, VIII, 1945, p. 297.
213 *Tai tsong piao tche tsi* T 2120, k. 2, p. 837 *c* 27–29; *Song kao seng tchouan* T 2061, k. 1, p. 713 *a* 17–20; Mochizuki, *Chron.*, p. 175.
214 *Tai isong piao tche isi* T 2120, k. 2, p. 834 *a*.
215 Cf. Jan Yüan-hua, Orissa Historical Research Journal VII, 3–4, 1958–59, p. 125–132.
216 Ces renseignements sont tirés du *Tcheng yuan sin ting che kiao mou lou* T 2157, k. 17, p. 894 c, publié en 800 par le maître en vinaya Yuan-tchao. Sur Prājña, voir encore *Ta t'ang tcheng yuan siu k'ai yuan che kiao lou* de 795, T 2156, k. 1, p. 755 *c* sq.; *Song kao seng tchouan* T 2061, k. 3, p. 722 *a-b*.
217 Cf. Reischauer, *Ennin's Diary*, New York, 1955.
218 Trad. E. Obermiller, II, p. 184–185.
219Cf. P. Demiéville, *Le Concile*, p. 188, n. I.
220 Cf. *Mahāyānasaṃgraha*, tr. fr., p. 314–317.
221 Tout ce qui suit d'après Candrakīrti, *Madhyamakāvatāra*, version tibétaine éd. par L. de La Vallée Poussin, St-Pétersbourg, 1912, p. 1–8; tr. fr. dans Muséon 1907, p. 252–257.
222 *Ajātaśatrukaukrtyavinodana* T 629, p. 451 *a* 14–19.—Sur les innombrables Buddha amenés à l'illumination par Mañjuśrī, ci-dessus: III, *sub fine*.
223 C'est un lieu commun de donner la Prajñāpāramitā comme la „Mère" des Buddha: cf. *Aṣiasāh.*, p. 254: *Eṣā hi mātā janayitrī tathāgatānām arhatāṃ samyaksaṃbuddhānām asyāḥ sarvajñatāyā darśayitrī lokasya ca saṃdarśayitrī*. Haribhadra dans son *Āloka*, p. 531, explique: *lokasya saṃdarśayitrī śūnyatādirūpeṇāvagamāt*.—Voir pour le détail Hôbôgirin, p. 209; Demiéville, *Le Concile*, p. 90, n. 4.

224 *Kāśyapaparivarta* § 88: *Yathāpi nāma, Kāśyapa, navacandro namaskriyate, sa caiva pūrṇacandro na tathā namaskriyate, evam eva, Kāśyapa, ye mama śraddadhanti tair balavan-tataram bodhisattva namaskartavyaḥ, na tathāgataḥ, tat kasya hetoh, bodhisattvanirjātā hi tathāgatāh.* Voir encore *Śraddhābalādhānāvatārasūtra* T 305, k. 5, p. 958 *c*: Tous les Buddha naissent des Bodhisattva ... C'est pourquoi ceux qui honorent les Bodhisattva honorent les Buddha Tathāgata; ceux qui calomnient les Bodhisattva calomnient les Buddha des trois temps.
225 *Drumakiṇnararājaparipṛcchā* T 625, k. 4, p. 385 *b* 20–21.
226 *Ajātaśatrurājasūtra* T 626, k. 1, p. 394 *b* 18–20.
227 *Mañjuśrībuddhakṣetraguṇavyūha* T 310, k. 59, p. 345 *b* 7–9.
228 *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa* T 475, k. 2, p. 551 *c* 18–19.

42

# THE OLDEST MAHĀYĀNA SŪTRA

## Its significance for the study of Buddhist development

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Source: *The Eastern Buddhist* 8, 1 (1975): 30–41.

The oldest extant from of a Mahāyāna sūtra, *Tao-hsing pan-jo ching*, is the translation of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* (hereafter abbr. *Aṣṭa*) done by Lokakṣema in the second century A.D. This translation, when compared with the Sanskrit manuscripts and the later Chinese and Tibetan translations, gives an indication of the major changes which occurred not only in the text itself, but in the whole of the Mahāyāna tradition. The *Aṣṭa* in its early version is preserved in two other translations besides the one by Lokakṣema: the *Ta ming-tu ching* and the *Mo-ho pan-jo-ch'ao ching*.

The *Aṣṭa*, now recognized as the first member of what later grew to be a whole family of sutras called *prajñāpāramitā*,[1] had a central place in the initial development of Mahāyāna in India and later played an important and pioneer role in China. Since it was the first full treatise on Mahāyāna to be made available to the Chinese, it served as an introduction for the literate to the major doctrines of this school of Buddhism.[2] Feeling that its teachings were compatible with those of the ancient sages of China, the material was eagerly studied and became of key importance to the spread of Buddhism.

### (i. *Tao-hsing pan-jo ching* 道行般若經, T. 224)

This pioneer translation was done, say the catalogues, by Chih Lou-chai-ch'an[3] 支婁迦讖, usually put into a Sansksrit form as Lokakṣema. Nanjio suggested Lokarakṣa[4] but this has been criticized by Bagchi[5] and has fallen out of use.

Lokakṣema was an Indo-Scythian monk, who has been associated with twenty-four translation titles,[6] but it is more likely that the number should be twenty-one.[7]

He settled in Lo-yang during the time of the reign of Huan-ti in the year of *Chien-ho* (A.D. 147)[8] and joined the translation bureau that had been established by An Shih-kao. His work in the city and with that bureau is said to have con-

tinued until the third year of *Chung-p'ing*[9] (A.D. 186) and during this stay he undertook the work of translating the *Tao-hsing pan-jo ching*. The catalogues tell us that he completed the work in the second year of *Kuang-ho* (A.D. 179–180).[10] In T. 2148, the text has *yuan-ho* which could either be an error for *yuan kuang-ho* or the *yuan* as an error for *kuang*. If it is the first possibility, then the date would be the first year of *Kuang-ho* (178–179 A.D.).[11]

### (ii. *Ta ming-tu ching* 大明度經, T. 225)

A second translation of this same text is said to have been done by Chih Ch'ien 支謙 during the time of the Three Kingdoms under the Wu Dynasty in the year of *Huang-mu* (222–229).[12] Chih Ch'ien was one of the most prolific of the early translators and there are still fifty-three works in the *Taishō* edition which bear his name on the colophon.[13] However, when the vocabulary and style of these numerous works are compared with one another, the *Ta ming-tu ching* stands out as a unique document with regard to style and vocabulary. It is conceivable that someone other than Chih Ch'ien is responsible for its translation, perhaps the early Central Asian monk An Hsüan 安玄.[14]

### (iii. *Mo-ho pan-jo ch'ao ching* 摩訶般若鈔經, T. 226)

The third translation of the *Aṣṭa* which belongs to this early textual tradition is attributed to T'an-ma-pi 曇摩蜱[15] for whom the Sanskrit equivalent is usually listed as Dharmapriya, an equivalent based on the translation used by the Chinese of Fa-ai 法愛. The date for the translation is said to be 382 A.D.,[16] a date which Hikata questions because he suggests another designation of the translator.[17] In contrast to the listing of Dharmapriya, some catalogues list the work as that of Dharmarakṣa who was active in China during the years of *T'ai Shih* (A.D. 265–274).[18]

A version, listed as being only five *chüan* in length,[19] it is considerably shorter than the eight or ten *chüan* usually quoted for Lokakṣema's text.[20] The difference in length is explained by the fact that only a part of the sutra is contained in Dharmapriya's version, i.e. thirteen chapters which correspond to Chapters I–VIII and XVI–XXIII in the Sanskrit. Tao An explains this partial text as a deliberate policy of translation rather than the loss of the central section, maintaining that whatever was identical with the *Fang-kuang* (放光 T. 221) and *Kuang-tsan* (光讚 T. 222) was not re-translated.[21] A comparison of the content of Chapters IX–XV in Lokakṣema with the early *Pañca viṃśati-sāhasrikā* (hereafter abbr. *Pañca*) translation of Mokṣala, fails to show how this material can be judged to be closer to the *Pañca* than is that in the thirteen extant chapters. It may have been a deliberate policy decision but it is also feasible to consider it as an accidental loss of a major part of the text.

The three translations of this textual tradition of the *Aṣṭa* appear under a bewildering array of names:

*Lokakṣema* (T. 224)
(1) *Tao-hsing pan-jo po-lo-mi ching*[22] (道行般若波羅蜜經)
(2) *Tao-hsing pan-jo ching*[23] (道行般若經)
(3) *Pan-jo tao-hsing p'in ching*[24] (般若道行品經)
(4) *Po-lo-mi pan-jo tao-hsing p'in ching*[25] (波羅蜜般若道行品經)
(5) *Mo-ho pan-jo po-lo-mi tao-hsing ching*[26] (摩訶般若波羅蜜道行經)

*Chih Ch'ien* (T. 225)
(1) *Ming-tu ching*[27] (明度經)
(2) *Ta ming-tu wu-chi ching*[28] (大明度無極經)
(3) *Ta ming-tu ching*[29] (大明度経)

*Dharmapriya* (T. 226)
(1) *Mo-ho po-lo-jo- po-lo-mi ching-ch'ao*[30] (摩訶鉢羅若波羅蜜經抄)
(2) *Ch'ang-an p'in ching*[31] (長安品經)
(3) *Mo-ho pan-jo ching*[32] (摩訶般若経)
(4) *Mo-ho pan-jo po-lo-mi ching ch'ao ch'ang-an p'in*[33] (摩訶般若波羅蜜經鈔長安品)
(5) *Hsu-p'u-t'i p'in*[34] (須菩提品)
(6) *Wai-kuo ching ch'ao*[35] (外国経抄)
(7) *Mo-ho pan-jo po-lo-mi ch'ao ching*[36] (摩訶般若波羅蜜鈔経)
(8) *Pan-lo jo*[37] (般羅若)
(9) *Mo-ho pan-jo po-lo-mi ching*[38] (摩訶般若波羅蜜経)

The variety of names given to those translations creates something of a problem of identification and raises the question of how the Chinese came to have so many titles for one work. The *prajñāpāramitā* texts coming from India and Central Asia in a steady stream were the cause of confusion for Tao An tells us that they had no heading but simply began with some auspicious greeting.[39] As the number of *prajñāpāramitā* texts multiplied it became necessary to give them some designation for the sake of identification. In India this was accomplished at a later date by naming them according to the number of lines which each contained, and so we have the rather mundane list of titles such as *Śatasāhasrikā* (100,000), *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā* (25,000)[40] etc., but this scheme was never employed by the Chinese. In place of counting the lines, the translations were given titles with reference to some distinctive feature of the work. Lokakṣema's text was entitled *Tao-hsing* (道行) based on the heading for its first chapter.[41] Chih Ch'ien's received the name of *Ta ming-tu* (大明度) because this was the particular method of translating *mahā-prajñāpāramitā* as contrasted with the transliteration used previously by Lokakṣema.[42] When the *Pañcaviṃśati-sāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* was brought to China, it was given the name of *Fang-kuang* (放光) because it was a longer and more expanded teaching than the *Aṣṭa* which was often referred to as *hsiao* (小) or shorter teaching.[43]

These three translations are not the total picture of the *Aṣṭa* material available

in Chinese, because the text continued to receive attention and was consequently translated four more times:

(1) *Mo-ho pan-jo po-lo-mi ching* (摩訶般若波羅蜜経, T.227) by Kumārajīva.[44]
(2) *Fo-mu-ch'u-shêng san-fa-tsang pan-jo po-lo-mi-to ching* (佛母出生三法藏, T. 228) by Dānapāla.[45]
(3) *Ta-pan-jo po-lo-mi-lo ching* (般若波羅蜜多経, T. 220 4) by Hsüan Tsang.[46]
(4) *Ta-pan-jo po-lo-mi-to ching* (T. 220 5) also by Hsüan Tsang.[47]

In a general division of the texts according to the content, we can put the first three translations, T. 224, T. 225 and T. 226, in one category. They are in basic agreement with one another and represent an early tradition which is similar to the later ones but by no means identical. A second tradition of the text is found in the translation by Kumārajīva (T. 227) and the fifth division of the sixteen part *prajñāpāramitā* collection of Hsüan Tsang (T. 220 5). These two translations are similar in content and chapter divisions, and while they still echo much of the earlier form of the text, it is obvious that development has occured. Dānapāla (T. 228) and the fourth division of Hsüan Tsang (T. 220 4) are in virtual agreement with one another and they bear a close affinity to the Tibetan and Sanskrit.

For the purpose of this present study, we will turn our attention to the tradition of the three early texts which provide us with insights into the teaching of Mahāyāna at a time when it was in a formative stage. Since the material for comparison involves a drawn out process of matching one translation against another, only four doctrinal items are covered in the remainder of this paper, but they will be sufficient to give an idea of the changes which have occurred within this sūtra.

### (i. *Dharma-kāya* 法身)

In the later *prajñāpāramitā* texts, there is the theory of the two bodies of the Buddha, the *rūpa-kāya* and the *Dharma-kāya*, a theory later expanded by the Yogācāra school to its most familiar enumeration of three bodies (*tri-kāya*).[48] In the early translations of the *Aṣṭa*, the conception of the abstract *Dharma-kāya* of the Buddha is not to be found. In every passage where the term occurs in the Sanskrit text or in the later Chinese and Tibetan, it is missing in these three early versions.[49] The one exception is the passage where *Dharma-kāya* is translated as "the collection of Buddha's sūtras," the same meaning we can find in "Hīnayāna."[50] Even in Kumārajīva's translation, the *Dharma-kāya* sections are not to be found in the main body of this first Mahāyāna sūtra.[51]

From this study of the Lokakṣema text, it appears that the earliest ideas in Mahāyāna sūtras were neither the two-body nor the three-body ones, but rather the notion of one Buddha body. We find in a long sermon by Dharmodgata, a description of this Buddha body and how it is brought to perfection. Since much

of this sermon can be seen as standing in conflict with the later conception of the *Dharma-kāya*, it is understandable that the sermon was considerably shortened and large parts of it do not occur in any translation after the *Ta ming-tu ching*.[52] The body of the Buddha is described as follows:

> (The Buddha's body) is like an echo in a mountain in that it cannot be constituted of one thing or of two things, but rather there is a mountain, a man, a cry, the ear that hears it and when these are combined, then and only then is there an echo.
>
> O Noble Sir, if you desire to know about the constitution of a Buddha's body (then you should be aware) that it is just like this. There is no shape and there is nothing to which it attaches. (This body) is produced from cause and conditions (*hetu-pratyaya*) and the (Buddha) in lifetime after lifetime understood emptiness and coursed in it. All birth and death has a lack of birth and death for its cause and so the Buddha knew and thoroughly understood that originally there is no birth and no death nor is there nirvāṇa. He appeared in the world in order to preach just this teaching.
>
> O Noble Sir, listen further, the Buddha's body is like a painting: a wall, paint, an artist, a brush, all these things must come together before one can have a painting of a person. If you desire to know about the body of the Buddha, (then you should be aware) that there is not the use of one thing to bring about its constitution, but there is the use of many thousands of things. The Bodhisattva has in the past practiced giving and upheld morality by not transgressing the Ten Rules of Moral Conduct; he constantly followed good teachers and with a resolute mind was concerned about men everywhere (lit. in the ten directions). There were none who obstructed him and so in lifetime after lifetime he saw the Buddha and heard about the practice of the Bodhisattvas. He became firmly established (in those practices), was not forgetful of them and in all of those lifetimes he was never deceitful and was always striving for sincerity.
>
> O Noble Sir, if you desire to know about the body of the Buddha, it is just like this.[53]

Here we have a description of the one body, the Buddha body, bound by the chain of causation, similar to all other physical bodies, but for all of that, a glorified, perfected *rūpa-kāya*, the result of many lifetimes of meritorious activity. In such a teaching, the early Mahāyāna is not different from the "Hīnayāna" for the idea of perfecting the body through the evolution of many eons of Bodhisattva action is quite similar to the rationale behind the recorded *jātaka* tales.

## (ii. *Bhūta-koṭi* 實際, 本際)

In the Sanskrit text of the *Aṣṭa*, there are ten references to *bhūta-koṭi*,[54] but only one of these occurs in the *Tao-hsing ching*[55] and even this one is missing from the *Ta ming-tu ching*.[56] The Dharmapriya text that is so similar to Lokakṣema's in content has two citations for this term not found in the earlier translation, a rare occurrence of dissimilarity between these two versions.[57]

The early Chinese translation is *pên-chi*[58] (本際) which has a distinct Taoist flavor of "original limit." This can be one explanation of the idea expounded by Hui Yüan that "the release of the spirit is returning to the origin."[59] In all cases, the use of *pên-chi* in the early texts implies the idea of nirvāṇa, as in Chapter XI where the Bodhisattva is urged by Māra to reach this "original limit."[60] In Chapter XVI, Dharmapriya uses the term *pên-chi*[61] while Lokakṣema has the phrase "the way of the Arhat."[62] The idea that *pên-chi* or *bhūta-koṭi* is used to mean nirvāṇa, is supported in Chapter V where Hsüan Tsang omits his usual form of *bhūta-koṭi* and puts in its place "nirvāṇa."[63] This may have been an attempt to separate the idea of *bhūta-koṭi* as nirvāṇa from its later meaning in Mahāyāna. Edgerton has indicated two possible ways to take the term in Buddhist texts, the first has the idea of *koṭi-gata* or the equivalent of nirvāṇa. However, in the Mahāyāna it can be used as the absolute truth (*paramārtha*).[64] In the *Materials for a Dictionary of the Prajñāpāramitā Literature* Conze lists a number of equivalent phrases used by Haribhadra in the commentary to the *Aṣṭa: bhūta-kāya, dharma-kāya-pariniṣpatti*, and *Dharma-dhātu*.[65] All of these imply the idea of perfection or the "reality limit" literally translated by the Tibetans as *yaṅ-dag-pa-ḥi-mthaḥ*.[66] Robinson follows this same pattern by his indication that it can be added to the roster of designations for the absolute[67] and later he translated it "absolute limit"[68] and gives it as the synonym for "the real mark of the dharmas."[69]

The fact that the early Mahāyāna sūtras refer to this term as meaning nirvāṇa, is another example of the pattern of following the usage found in the *Āgamas* or *Nikāyas* and not the later developed meaning or focus of a Mahāyāna technical term.

## (iii. *Advaya* 無二)

This term occurs four times in the standard tradition of the *Aṣṭa*[70] but it is missing completely from the three translations of the earliest form of the text.[71] In Chapter I of the Chih Ch'ien text, there is one reference to *advaya*, but since this chapter has undergone extensive re-working at some later time, it does not belong to the original textual tradition of the Chinese *Aṣṭa*.[72] The omission of this doctrine in the *Stanzas* of Nāgārjuna[73] is also an indication that such concepts may have been lacking in the original *prajñāpāramitā* literature which was used by Nāgārjuna.

### (iv. *Dharma-dhātu* 法界)

Here again we have a term which is not included in the *Stanzas*[74] and we find it to be missing entirely from the early translations of the *Aṣṭa*.[75] There are seven places where it can be found in the Sanskrit, but the fact that the term is late in its admission to the *Aṣṭa* text can be seen when one notes that even Kumārajīva's text omits all of these sections and Hsüan Tsang's fifth section has only one.[76]

These four doctrinal items are only a sample of the terms which can be used to check the development of the *Aṣṭa*; it is a list that can be extended to include such key terms as: *upāya-kauśalya, kuśala-mūla, karma, Bodhisattva* and others. This early tradition, preserved in Chinese translations, offers us the opportunity to study in detail the process by which the *prajñāpāramitā* texts were being expanded, abbreviated, re-arranged, and generally undergoing major transformations involving doctrinal as well as philological changes. Far too often, there is the tacit assumption that a Sanskrit edition represents the "original," when in fact such editions are usually based on manuscripts that come from a relatively late period of Buddhist history in India. The discovery of fragments and texts in Central Asia[77] and Gilgit[78] has offered additional proof that the Sanskrit tradition for Buddhist sūtras was by no means an unchanging one, and the ancient fragments suggest great differences from the manuscripts of the Pāla Dynasty or those preserved in Nepal. While these manuscript finds are few and the hope for uncovering more is remote, we still have before us the dated Chinese translations which in many cases represent the earliest known examples of Buddhist sūtras. By a careful consideration of the content of these translations, we have a glimpse of the way in which Mahāyāna literature developed and in turn the way in which Buddhism as a religious movement was growing and changing. It is no longer feasible to dismiss the differences between the early Chinese versions and the later Sanskrit tradition as only representing abbreviations or the whim of the translators, for there are examples of ancient Sanskrit texts which match very closely the translations made in China.[79]

The view of early Mahāyāna provided in these translations is often startling and the fact that so much of the material is in a form which we can call "Hīnayāna" reminds us once again that Mahāyāna did not spring into life as a fullblown and mature movement, but proceeded through a long period of maturation. The story of that process is found embedded in the translations which early missionary and Chinese monks made centuries ago in China and neglect of these documents deprives us of a most valuable research source.

## Notes

1 See E. Conze, *The Prajñāpāramitā Literature* (Indo-Iranian Monographs No. VI), 's Gravenhage: Mouton, 1960, pp. 51 ff. for a full bibliography of the Tibetan, Mongolian, English, German and French translations.

2 K. Ch'en, *Buddhism in China* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964) pp. 48 ff.

3 T. 2150–346c; T. 2151–348c; T. 2145–6b; T. 2155–724a; T. 2157–775c; T. 2153–381b; T. 2154–478c; T. 2148–189b; T. 2147–158c; T. 2149–223c.
4 B. Nanjio, *A Catalogue of the Buddhist Tripitaka* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1883), p. 4.
5 P. C. Bagchi, *Le Canon Bouddhique en Chine* (Sino-Indica Publications of the University of Calcutta, Tome I, Paris: Librairie Orientaliste, Paul Geuthner, 1927), pp. 37–38.
6 T. 2149–224a.
7 See Ono, *Bussho Kaisetsu*, Vol. 12, pp. 32 ff.
8 T. 2157–776a.
9 *Ibid.*
10 T. 2145–6b; T. 2153–381b; T. 2154–478c; T. 2157–775c.
11 T. 2148–189b.
12 T. 2147–158c; T. 2146–119b; T. 2145–7a; T. 2149–227c; T. 2153–381b; T. 2155–724a.
13 *Hobogirin*, p. 148.
14 See L. Lancaster, "The Chinese Translation of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* Attributed to Chih Ch'ien," *Monumenta Serica* Vol. XXVIII, 1969, pp. 246–257 for a full discussion of this theory.
15 T. 2145–10b; T. 2146–144a; T. 2149–250a; T. 2154–511a.
16 Kajiyoshi Koun, *Genshi bannyakyō no kenkyū* (Tokyo, 1944), pp. 45 ff.
17 R. Hikata, *Suvikrāntavikrāmi-paripṛcchā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* (Fukuoka, 1958), p. xv.
18 T. 2146–119b; T. 2148–189b.
19 T. 2145–10b; T. 2149–250a; T. 2155–724a. T. 2154–511a refers to a seven *cbüan* version.
20 T. 2150–346c; T. 2154–478c; T. 2148–189b; see footnote three for a complete list of references.
21 Hikata, p. xv; also see T. 2145–52b ff.
22 T. 2150–346c; T. 2154–478c; T. 2148–189b; T. 2147–158c; T. 2155–724a; T. 2149–223c; T. 2157–775c; T. 2146–119b.
23 T. 2153–381b.
24 T. 2151–348c; T. 2155–724a; T. 2145–6b; T. 2157–775c.
25 T. 2150–346c.
26 T. 2157–775c; Ono, Vol. 10, 274b.
27 T. 2146–119b; T. 2147–158c; T. 2148–189b; T. 2145–7a.
28 T. 2145–7a; T. 2146–119b; T. 2147–158c; T. 2148–189b; T. 2149–227c; T. 2153–381b; T. 2154–487c; T. 2155–724a.
29 T. 2153–381b; T. 2155–724a; T. 2157–785a.
30 T. 2145–10b.
31 T. 2145–10b; T. 2146–144a; T. 2149–250a; T. 2154–511a; T. 2148–196a; T. 2153–381c; T. 2155–724a.
32 T. 2146–144a.
33 T. 2148–196a; T. 2153–381c.
34 T. 2148–196a; T. 2154–511a; T. 2153–381c; T. 2155–724a.
35 T. 2149–250a.
36 T. 2154–511a.
37 T. 2154–511a.
38 T. 2155–724a; T. 2145–10b.
39 T. 2145–52c ff.
40 See Conze, *Prajñāpāramitā Literature* for a full account of all these numerical titles.
41 T. 224–425c.
42 T. 224–42 5c: 22 compared to T. 225–483c: 12.

43 Thus we have the title of *Hsiao-p'in mo-ho pan-jo po-lo-mi ching* for Kumārajīva's translation, T. 227–537a.
44 *Taishō*, Vol. 8, pp. 536–586.
45 *Ibid.*, pp. 587–676.
46 *Taishō* Vol. 7, pp. 763–865.
47 *Ibid.*, pp. 865–921.
48 See G. Nagao, "On the Theory of Buddha-Body," *The Eastern Buddhist, New Series*, Vol. VI, No. I, May, 1973, pp. 25–53 for a detailed study of this development.
49 Wogihara edition of *Aṣṭa* (abbr. W) 268: 5–6 missing T. 224–435c: 3 ff.; T. 225–485b: 10 ff., T. 226–517b: 18 ff.
W. 277: 26–27 missing T. 224–436a: 24 ff., T. 225–485c: 4 ff., T. 226–518a: 6 ff.
W. 691: 9 missing T. 224–456 a:16 ff., T. 225–495c: 19 ff., T. 226–528c: 3 ff.
W. 965: 5–6 missing T. 224–476a: ff., T. 225 section missing, T. 226 text missing.
50 See T. 224–468c: 18 ff and T. 225–502c: 20 ff. This is the use found in D. N. iii, 84.24. Reference also occurs in Edgerton, *Hybrid-Sanskrit Dictionary*, p. 277 and Rhys-Davids and Stede, *Pāli–English Dictionary*, p. 174.
51 See T. 227–545a: 26 ff., T. 227–545c: 8 ff., T. 227–565c: 14 ff.
52 Compare T. 224–472a: 26 ff., T. 225–504c: 11 ff., with T. 227–582a: 10 and T. 228–670c: 10 ff.
53 T. 224–476c and T. 225–507b.
54 W. 67: 20; W. 268: 5–6; W. 288: 13–289: 4; W. 470: 22; W. 525: 2; W. 645: 1; W. 754: 3; W. 756: 23, 757: 20; W. 809: 10; W. 845: 22.
55 Compare W. 525: 2 with T. 224–448b: 27.
56 T. 225–491a.
57 Such differences between the two texts are indeed rare, but they do occur as in T. 224–428b: 29-C: 23 compared to T. 226–511b: 11–27 and T. 224–456c: 20 ff. compared to T. 226–529b: 23.
58 See T. 224–448b: 27.
59 R. Robinson, *Early Mādbyamika in India and China* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1966), p. 107.
60 T. 224–442c: 22; T. 226–524b: 13; T. 227–552a: 22 ff. See also W. 523–525, T. 224–448b: 20 ff., T. 227–557b: 7 ff., T. 220(5) 892b: 22 ff., T. 220(4) 813c: 4 ff., T. 228–627c: 18 ff.
61 T. 224–453c: 8 compared to T. 226–525c: 8.
62 T. 224–453c: 8.
63 T. 220(4)–783c: 5.
64 Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Dictionary*, p. 410.
65 E. Conze, *Materials for a Dictionary of the Prajñāpāramitā Literature* (Tokyo: Suzuki Research Foundation, 1967), p. 308.
66 S. Das, *Tibetan-English Dictionary* (West Bengal: Government Press, 1960), p. 1127.
67 Robinson, p. 108.
68 *Ibid.*, p. 143.
69 *Ibid.*, pp. 263, 276.
70 W. 114: 7; W. 407: 11; W. 620: 17 ff.; W. 666: 6.
71 See T. 224–428b: 14, 442a: 9, 453b: 5, 454b: 15; T. 226–511a: 28, 523c: 4 ff., 526c: 4; T. 225–488b: 7 ff., 493c: 29, 494c: 1.
72 T. 225–481b: 23.
73 Robinson, p. 63.
74 *Ibid.*
75 T. 224–439a: 26 ff., 439b: 17 ff., 443a: 26 ff., 444a: 26 ff.; T. 225–486c: 25 ff., 487a: 13 ff., 489a: 2, 489b: 8 ff.; T. 226–520c: 15 ff., 521a: 16 ff., 524c: 13 ff.; compare these sections of the Chinese with: W. 357: 22, 359: 1, 360: 1, 364: 9, 428: 24.

76 T. 220(5)–893b: 10.
77 See such volumes as A. F. R. Hoernle, *Manuscript Remains of Buddhist Literature Found in Eastern Turkestan* (Oxford: University Press, 1916), and G. Tucci *Minor Buddhist Texts* Part 1 (Rome: Instituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1956), Serie Orientale Roma IX, pp. 175–192 for a view of the earliest Sanskrit for the *Vajracchedikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*. From a comparison of these texts with the Chinese one can see how closely certain translations accord with these ancient texts.
78 Tucci, pp. 175–192.
79 See note 77.

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# INSPIRED SPEECH IN EARLY MAHĀYĀNA BUDDHISM

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When we contemplate the rise of Mahāyāna Buddhism we are bound to be struck by the significance of the creation of scripture that accompanies the movement: the new production of *sūtras* signals a religious revolution. It is not merely the content of these *sūtras* that is of significance, but the very fact of their coming into being. The broad religious issue at stake here is that of the reception of revelation[1] by the community in ways that are open as opposed to closed. In a closed tradition the truth is seen as revealed at a particular point in time through a particular individual or group of individuals; beyond this individual or group (in either space or time) revelation is inaccessible. In an open tradition these restrictions on access to the truth are denied. In this article I shall try to work towards an understanding of the shift from a closed to an open tradition that I believe is indicated in the rise of Mahāyāna. The attempt will be made to discover the extent to which the two traditions (pre-Mahāyāna and Mahāyāna Buddhism) in fact see themselves as closed or open, and to find the means whereby the shift in question took place. The method adopted will be to investigate the contribution made to the articulation of revelation by the 'founder' (the Buddha) on the one hand, and by the members of the community, contemporary with and subsequent to the founder, on the other hand. Since revelation was preserved chiefly in *sūtra*, most of our effort will go into determining the means whereby *sūtra* was generated. The two concepts that prove to be most crucial to this analysis are the word of the Buddha' (*buddhavacana*) and 'inspired speech' (*pratibhāna*).

Mahāyāna Buddhism first becomes visible to the historian as a movement centred around the public expounding of texts. These texts were called '*sūtras*'[2] and were taken as true and authoritative by those who recited and expounded them. When traditional Buddhists began to take the movement seriously one of their main criticisms was that these alleged *sūtras* were spurious; they could not be accepted as Buddhist *sūtras* because they were not the word of the Buddha and hence not grounded in his wisdom and enlightenment. Many responses were

given by members of the new movement to the traditionalist attacks. Generally speaking such responses included the claim that the Mahāyāna *sūtras* were indeed preached by the Buddha and were hence as legitimate as the accepted canon.[3] One might well gain the impression, therefore, that both the attackers and the defenders agreed on the fundamental point that *sūtra* must be the literal word of the historical Buddha and disagreed only on what specific texts fulfilled this requirement. But did the early Mahāyānists really believe that their texts were the speech of the 'historical' Buddha? Is the dispute merely a disagreement over particular historical facts? Examination will show that the matter is more complex than this, and that it involves a fundamental religious shift implicating the view of history and revelation.

It will be convenient to begin by determining the initial status of the requirement that *sūtra* be the literal word of the Buddha. To what extent and in what sense is this requirement acknowledged in the traditional canon? Next, it will be found profitable to explore the canon further regarding one of the means of *sūtra* production that is found to deviate somewhat from the *buddhavacana* paradigm, namely that of 'inspired speech' as indicated by the use of *prati-bhā* constructions. Finally, the notion of inspired speech in early Mahāyāna will be investigated, chiefly as found in the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā (The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines)*, an early *sūtra* of the Perfection of Wisdom group.

## Sūtra as the word of the Buddha

It is clear that in the early days of Mahāyāna the conviction was common that *sūtra* had to be the word of the Buddha. The *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* warns the devotees of the perfection of wisdom that they must be prepared to hear this *sūtra* rejected and reviled on such grounds by both traditional Buddhists and other Mahāyāna groups. The attack by the traditionalists, which is of more immediate importance to us, is described as follows:

> Furthermore, Mara, the Evil One, may come along in the guise of a Shramana, and say: 'Give up what you have heard up to now, abandon what you have gained so far! And if you follow this advice, we will again and again approach you, and say to you: "What you have heard just now, that is not the word of the Buddha. It is poetry, the work of poets. But what I here teach to you, that is the teaching of the Buddha, that is the word of the Buddha".'[4]

There are several things worthy of note here. First, the words of the traditionalists as quoted allude to a canonical utterance,[5] and with their ring of orthodoxy probably represent accurately the attacks made on Mahāyāna. Second, the attack is obviously viewed as very dangerous. The passage casts the traditionalists in the role of Māra, the prime tempter and enemy for Buddhists. The efforts of

these monks to call Mahāyānists back to orthodoxy were seen as a terrible temptation which a member of the new movement (a *bodhisattva*) must reject at all costs. If he gives in he is a backslider.[6] Finally, we are favoured with a clear expression of the issue under debate at the time, namely that of authorship versus revelation. The new *sūtras* are dismissed as poetry, the work of poets' (*kavikṛtaṃ kāvyam*), to which is opposed *buddhavacana*, the truth as perfectly revealed (uncovered, opened up, displayed) to the community by the Buddha. Other early Mahāyāna works attest to the same same traditionalist criticism in much the same terms, so we are left in no doubt as to its prevalence.[7]

Is this understanding of *sūtra* evidenced in the canon? No doubt the classic canonical statement of what *sūtra* is, of what qualifies as *sūtra*, is found in the accounts of the First Council in the Vinaya.[8] The statement is given in narrative form as follows.

After the death of the Lord a council is convened at Rājagṛha in order to collect and recite the *dharma* (*sūtra*)[9] and *vinaya*. The council is to be attended only by those who are utterly pure and have reached the highest goal (Arhatship), yet Ānanda, who was the Buddha's personal attendant and therefore heard and retained the Buddha's discourses, has not yet reached the goal. It is to everyone's relief that he attains it at the eleventh hour and joins the council. When Mahākāśyapa directs the collecting and arranging of the *sūtras* Ānanda is the chief witness called upon. According to some of the accounts he verifies the context and arrangement of the *sūtras*, while in others he actually recites the entire collection of *sūtras* from memory.[10] (Further witnesses, themselves *arhats*, are called upon to verify the accuracy of his recollections.) At the conclusion of his task the *sūtra-piṭaka* is considered established and the door to further production of *sūtra* closed.

The main point of the account is to show that the truth revealed by the Buddha has been transmitted to the community in a perfect and final state. The council is the medium for this transmission and hence must be perfectly pure. It is especially important that Ānanda have such purity since he is the chief medium; his attainment of Arhatship is crucial, for it is not enough that he be learned (*bahuśruta*—'one who has heard much'): he must be able to give what he has heard undistorted and unsullied. Ānanada's function is that of a clean receptacle.[11]

In connection with the above point the accounts also aim to define the revelation, to give the criteria that permit something to be counted as *dharma* (or *sūtra*). And here we find the *buddhavacana* requirement strongly expressed. *Sūtra* is portrayed as ideally the direct record of the Buddha's speech. The accounts of the First Council differ on a good many points, but in the later and more developed accounts this *buddhavacana* ideal is put forth very resolutely. In one version, for example, the gods, seeing that Ānanda is about to recite the *sūtras*, say to one another, 'Be it known, good sirs, that the noble Ānanda is about to proclaim the *sūtra*, the *dharma*, spoken by the Tathāgata. We must listen attentively.'[12] In another account, when Ānanda gives the opening formula of his *sūtra* recitation the *arhats*, deeply moved, say, 'With our own eyes we

have beheld the World Honoured One [*Bhagavat*]; now we hear his words'.[13] Having recited all of the *sūtras*, Ānanda says (according to the same account), 'All of this *dharma* that I have retained in my memory is what was spoken by the Buddha, who has now gone to *Nirvāṇa*'.[14] In one version the two points—the finality of the arrangement of *sūtra* and the definition of this *sūtra* as the word of the Buddha—are neatly summed up at the conclusion of Ānanda's recital:

> Then Mahākāśyapa said to Ānanda, 'There are just this many *sūtras* in the *āgamas*, beyond this there are none.' Having said this he descended from the high seat. Then the Venerable Kāśyapa addressed the great gathering: 'Be it known that the *sūtras* spoken by the World Honoured One have now all been assembled.'[15]

Yet despite the *buddhavacana* definition of *sūtra* implied in the Council accounts, all of these accounts, not expecting the more developed ones, show an awareness that Āṇanda was not a direct witness to all of the Buddha's sermons and, more importantly, that *not all of the discourses that form the basis for the sūtras were in fact spoken by the Buddha*.[16] Some, for example, were spoken by various disciples. These facts are admitted because they are obvious to anyone who reads the *sūtras*, but they are not made much of; the second point, in fact, is often acknowledged very briefly and left in obvious disharmony with the *buddhavacana* criterion so stoutly championed elsewhere in the narrative.

The ideal, to sum up, is this. The Buddha revealed the truth on various occasions; his discourses were directly witnessed and retained; these discourses were then rendered to the council in a perfect state and there bound together, so to speak, in a final and closed corpus, the *sūtra-piṭaka*, which represents the revelation as possessed by the community. The fact that some *sūtras* do not record the word of the Buddha remains to cast its shadow.

Professor Lamotte suggests that we not take the *buddhavacana* definition in a narrow sense. He remarks:

> Le Dharma [exposé dans les *Sūtra*] est à proprement parler Parole du Buddha (*buddhavacana*), mais cette définition n'est pas à prendre au sens restreint. A en juger d'après les explications fournies par tous les Vinaya les uns après les autres—*Vin. des Mahāsāṃghika* (T 1425, k. 13, p. 336 a 21); *Vin. des Mūlasarv.* (T 1442, k. 26, p. 771 b 22); *Vin. pāli* (IV, p. 15); *Vin. des Dharmagupta* (T 1428, k. 11, p. 639 a 16); *Vin. des Sarvāstivādin* (T 1435, k. 9, p. 71 b 1)—le Dharma est ce quiest énoncé par le Buddha, sans doute et avant tout, mais aussi par les auditeurs (*śrāvaka*), les sages ermites (*ṛṣi*), les dieux (*deva*) et les êtres apparitionels (*upàpāduka*).[17]

This statement is perceptive but, like the Council accounts, leaves certain questions unanswered. If the Buddha's word is the model, how can the *dharma*

(and hence *sūtra*) be that which is spoken by this assortment of beings (*śrāvakas*, sages and so on)? What is the connection between the model and the alternatives? Under what *circumstances* are those other than the Buddha admitted to speak words acceptable as *sūtra*? The problem is not solved by reference to Lamotte's sources for in fact these sources differ significantly from one another in their definition of *dharma*, he having chosen the widest of the definitions (that from the *Sarvāstivādin Vinaya*) for his exposition.[18]

In the end, of course, the surest method of investigating this issue is to study the *sūtra-piṭaka* itself. I am not here interested in attempting to determine how many *sūtras*, as a matter of historical fact, record the Buddha's speech and how many record the speech of others, but rather in the more manageable question of what the *sūtras* themselves say about the matter.

It is found that the great majority of *sūtras* do indeed present themselves as giving the Buddha's words directly. There is, however, a significant number of *sūtras* that encapsulate the words of others. These may be divided into three types: (1) discourses that expand and interpret *buddhavacana*; (2) straightforward sermons or remarks that have no such obvious relation to the Buddha's word; (3) creative, spontaneous and inspired utterances.

The first category is of great importance to the tradition.[19] Discourses by the Buddha can be either in brief or in detail,[20] and it is only wisdom such as characterizes the greatest disciples that allows the brief utterances to be interpreted and transformed into detailed discourses. Śāriputra is the most famous for his abilities in this area.[21] We see here the establishing of a process whereby disciples of the Buddha can open up or extend *buddhavacana*. The apparent newness of such a discourse, it is implied, is deceiving: it is merely the natural unfolding, in light of the wisdom of the disciples in question, of what the Buddha has himself revealed.

The second category embraces a good many *sūtras*, many more than the preceding category.[22] The great majority of the discourses in question are given by a select few Great Disciples (such as Śāriputra, Ānanda, Mahākāśyapa, and Mahāmaudgalyāyana), though occasionally we hear from lesser monks and nuns, laypeople, gods, and so on. As far as content is concerned this is a very mixed group, and the utterances range from virtual repetition of standard doctrinal material, most of which apparently has its origin in the Buddha, to comparatively free and creative speech that is less directly dependent on standard formulas and on words of the Buddha. In terms of the present research it is these apparently creative speeches that intrigue us, for we wonder how they can be related to the *buddhavacana* criterion.

In pursuing this same problem category (3) utterances are of exceptional importance, and for this reason they will be studied separately in the next section of the paper. Obviously, to the extent that people other than the Buddha can give creative and spontaneous speech that does not rely on his formulations, speech that can be acceptable as the basis of *sūtra*, the requirement that *sūtra* be *buddhavacana* is thrown in doubt, and the claim that the tradition sees itself as

closed is made questionable. In attempting to isolate this category of utterances I have had recourse to a simple criterion, namely that the passage must contain a *prati-bhā* construction. This criterion does not do the job perfectly, giving up a group consisting of all such utterances and only such utterances as are creative, spontaneous and inspired, but there are some advantages in exploring the use of one construction in depth, and the procedure will be found to yield interesting results.

We must now return to our earlier problem, namely: How are such utterances by those other than the Buddha, which we have now arranged in three categories, related to *buddhavacana*? Is it, in fact, necessary that there by any link at all to the Buddha? These questions are, in part, Buddhological questions, and they require Buddhological answers. The canon firmly insists on the fundamental difference between the function of the Buddha as teacher and the function of other teachers of *dharma*. When a Buddha arises in the world (a rare event) he, having by himself penetrated the world with his insight, makes the truth known to others (*imaṃ lokaṃ ... sayaṃ abhinna sacchikatvā pavedeti*);[23] he is the trainer of the human steer (*purisa-damma-sārathi*), the teacher of gods and men (*satthā deva-manussānaṃ*); he teaches the *dharma* (*dhammaṃ deseti*) and reveals the pure way of life that accords with it (*brahmacariyaṃ pakāseti*). When others, even the greatest disciples, teach the *dharma*, they teach what was first made known by him. To be sure, they teach it only after they have personally verified it by their own experience, but their personal realization itself stems from arduous training in the Buddha's teaching. The distinction is sometimes expressed in Buddhist texts through the common symbolism of the wheel of *dharma*: the Buddha has set this wheel in motion, while the function of his disciples is to keep it rolling.[24] Here is another way of articulating the distinction (from the *Gopakamoggallāna Sutta*):

> 'Is there even one monk, Ānanda, who is possessed in every way and in every part of all those things of which the good Gotama, perfected one, fully Self-Awakened One, was possessed?'
>
> 'There is not even one monk, brahman, who is possessed in every way and in every part of all those things of which the Lord was possessed, perfected one, fully Self-Awakened One. For, brahman, this Lord was one to make arise a Way that had not arisen (before), to bring about a Way not brought about (before), to show a Way not shown (before); he was a knower of the Way, an understander of the Way skilled in the Way. But the disciples are now Way-followers following after him.'[25]

Given this Buddhological framework it is no surprise that the community defines *dharma* (and hence *sūtra*) as ideally the word of the Buddha, and it should also come as no surprise to learn that the Buddha is given a position of

control over *all* expressions of *dharma*. For this is found to be the case. In brief, utterances by people other than the Buddha are accepted as the basis for *sūtra* only with his certification.

Three types of certification may be distinguished: approval after the event, approval before the event, and authorization of persons.

The first works as follows.[26] Someone gives a discourse; the hearer of the discourse subsequently repeats it verbatim to the Buddha; the Buddha gives his approval of it. He commonly gives his approval by saying that under the circumstances he would have said precisely the same thing. In some cases he even repeats the discourse word for word when giving his approval. In these ways he transmutes the utterance after the fact into *buddhavacana*.

By certification before the event I refer to formulas whereby the Buddha invites someone to give a discourse on his behalf.[27] Even where such discourses are not followed by certification after the event (as they frequently are) it is evident that they are to be considered as '*buddhavacana* by permission'.

Even with these two types of certification taken into account there still remain a fair number of *sūtra* discourses left uncertified.[28] But it will be found that the individuals responsible for such discourses, almost always the Great Disciples, have on various occasions been so praised by the Buddha with respect to their wisdom and ability as to be considered authorized by him to speak *dharma*, their words certified in advance.[29]

All of the three categories of utterance listed earlier receive certification by one or another of these means, even category (1) utterances with their obvious inherent connection with *buddhavacana*. And when all three modes of certification are taken into account there remain very few *sūtras* in the canon that are based on discourses presented as neither given by the Buddha nor certified by him. Of all the canonical definitions of *dharma* noted by Lamotte in the passage cited earlier, I am, therefore, most favourably impressed by the following one from the *Mahāsāṃghika Vinaya*:

> By '*dharma*' is meant that which the Buddha has spoken and that which the Buddha has certified. By 'that which the Buddha has spoken' is meant that which the Buddha has personally and with his own mouth spoken; by 'that which the Buddha has certified' is meant that which the Buddha's disciples or others have spoken and which has been certified by the Buddha.[30]

Now it is evident that all of these certification schemes formally require that the Buddha be present in the world, that he be accessible to certify. After his death the first two forms of certification become impossible and after the death of the Companions, the Great Disciples who have received personal sanction from the Buddha, there is no possibility of *dharma* being preached under the third sort of certification. *Sūtra* production must here come to an end.

The findings of the present section may be summarized as follows:

(1) At the time of early Mahāyāna the view that *sūtra* must record *buddhavacana* was used by traditional Buddhists against the new Mahāyāna productions.
(2) Rather strong and literalist statements of this position can in fact be attested in canonical sources, such as in some of the accounts of the First Council.
(3) A look at the *sūtra-piṭaka*, however, shows a more complicated situation. Here *buddhavacana* is still the ideal but can be extended through the process of certification to include the utterances of others.
(4) Such certification assumes the Buddha's presence in the world.

## Prati-bhā in the sūtra-piṭaka

In exploring the limits of creative and independent speech as presented in the canon, the third group of utterances listed earlier, that of inspired speech, is of exceptional importance. In ancient India, as elsewhere, there was a recognition of the existence of a process whereby the reception of intuition or insight is directly linked with the faculty of expression. The seer and the poet belong to the same family to the extent that they are participants in this process.[31] Of the terms used in India to capture this dual activity of unimpeded reception and expression, some of the most interesting are the *prati-bhā* constructions, including various verbal forms from the root *bhā* and prefix *prati-*, as well as the noun *pratibhāna*. A passage from Gonda's *The Vision of the Vedic Poets* will serve to introduce the concept as issue:

> A term of no mean interest in this connection is *pratibhā* ... It etymologically belongs to *prati-bhā*—'to shine upon; come into sight, present oneself to' but also 'to appear to the mind, to flash upon the thought, occur to, become clear or manifest' ... It usually denotes 'a sudden thought, "ein aufleuchtender Gedanke" (Petr. Dict., a quick understanding or insight', then also 'presence of mind, wit, genius', 'boldness, audacity', 'fancy, imagination'. The substantive *pratibhāna-*, moreover, means 'obviousness, intelligence, presence of mind; quick-wittedness, brilliance'. *In Buddhist texts the association with 'readiness in speech' is perhaps more marked, hence 'presence of mind, brilliance, inspiration', especially as manifested in speech* ... [emphasis mine][32]

The following remarks should contribute in some measure to the understanding of the use of the expression, and hence the understanding of inspired speech, in the Buddhist canon.

Of the roughly two dozen occasions I have noted where *prati-bhā* (= Pali *paṭi-bhā*) constructions are used in the *sūtra-piṭaka* (excluding occurrences of *pratibhāna* = Pali *paṭibhāna*), over two-thirds fall into two equally common categories:

(a) Someone is *invited* (usually by the Buddha) to have something 'occur' or 'be revealed' to him, whereupon he gives a *doctrinal, prose* discourse.[33] For example:

> Now on that occasion the Exalted One was seated surrounded by monks, the day being the sabbath. And when the Exalted One for much of the night had instructed, stirred, fired, and gladdened the monks with a talk about dhamma, on looking round and seeing that the order of monks was perfectly silent, he called to the venerable Sāriputta, saying: 'Sāriputta, the order of monks has banished sloth-and-torpor. Let some dhamma-talk occur to you. [*paṭibhātu taṃ Sāriputta bhikkhūnam dhammi-kathā.*] My back aches. I will ease it.
>
> 'Very well, sir', replied the venerable Sāriputta to the Exalted One. Then the Exalted One had his robe spread fourfold, and lying on his right side he took up the lion-posture, resting foot on foot, mindful and composed, fixing his thoughts on rising up again.
>
> Thereupon the venerable Sāriputta called to the monks, saying: 'Monks, your reverences'.
>
> 'Yes, Sāriputta, your reverence', replied those monks to the venerable Sāriputta, who said:
>
> 'Your reverences, whosoever hath not faith in good states . . .[34]

Sometimes the discourse thus given is followed by 'certification after the event', as in the case just referred to, where the Buddha says at the conclusion of Sāriputta's sermon: 'Well said! Well said, Sāriputta!' (*Sādhu sādhu, Sāriputta!*),[35] and then goes on to repeat the sermon in full.

(b) Something *spontaneously* 'occurs' or 'is revealed' to someone and he gives notice of this; after having been *invited* (usually by the Buddha) to give expression to his inspiration he gives a *verse* of *praise*.[36] For example:

> Then the venerable Vangīsa, arising from his seat, and draping his outer robe over one shoulder, bent his clasped hands saluting toward the Exalted One, and said: 'It is revealed to me, Exalted One! it is revealed to me, Blessed One!' [*Paṭibhāti maṃ Bhagavā paṭibhāti maṃ Sugatā ti.*]
>
> And the Exalted One said: 'Be it revealed to thee, Vangīsa'. [*Paṭibhātu taṃ Vaṅgīsā ti.*]
>
> Then the venerable Vangīsa extolled the Exalted One in his presence with suitable verses:
>
> To-day on feast-day, for full purity,
> Five hundred brethren are together come.
> Such as have cut their fetters, cut their bonds,
> Seers who are free from rebirth and from ill.

All we are sons of the Exalted One;
No sterile chaff may amongst us be found.
I worship him who strikes down craving's dart.
I greet the offspring of the sun's great line.[37]

Outside of these two categories most of the instances of *prati-bhā* constructions involve either similes occuring to people, or things being revealed (clear, evident, manifest) to the Buddha.

From the passages quoted representing the two major categories it can be seen that it would be misleading to suggest that all *prati-bhā* constructions indicate inspired speech in a strong sense. Only utterances of the second type, with their greater degree of spontaneity and emotional depth, can be taken without hesitation as involving inspiration in the generally accepted sense of the word. In fact, one could argue that *prati-bhā* speech is either doctrinally rich, as in (a); or inspired, as in (b), but not both. I believe, however, that it is legitimate to use the term 'inspired speech' for both sorts of utterance provided we are careful not to confuse the two or overlook their differences. It is convenient to be able to employ a single English term to refer to what is expressed with a single term in Sanskrit (and Pali); besides, the two sorts of construction are significantly related, for they indicate, first, that according to this literature the Buddha not only permitted but invited religious speech from his followers, and, second, that it was not merely considered acceptable but highly desirable that such speech have the quality of spontaneity.

Yet the two constructions do imply different views of inspiration. Most importantly, the spontaneity that each sort of speech is supposed to have arises from different sources. Two passages may be quoted to help explain this, one referring to the Buddha, who is the ideal category (a) speaker, and one referring to the monk Vaṅgīsa, who is the model for category (b) speech. The first is from the *Abhayarāja-kumāra-sutta*, wherein Prince Abhaya converses with the Buddha:

> 'Revered sir, if those who are learned nobles and learned brahmans and learned householders and learned recluses approach the Tathāgata and ask a question they have constructed—has the Lord already reflected in his mind on this, thinking "Whoever, having approached me, questions me like this, then, asked thus, I will answer them thus," or does (the answer) occur to a Tathāgata immediately? [*udāhu ṭhānso v'etaṃ Tathāgataṃ paṭibhāṭīti?*]
>
> 'Well then, Prince, I will ask you a question in return. As it may please you, so may you answer it. What do you think about this, Prince? Are you skilled in the various parts of a chariot?'
>
> 'Yes, revered sir, I am skilled in the various parts of a chariot.'
>
> 'What do you think about this, Prince? If those who have approached you should ask thus: "What is the name of this particular part of the

chariot?" would you have already reflected on this in your mind, thinking: "If those who have approached me should ask thus, then I will answer them thus," or would (the answer) occur to you immediately?'

'Because, revered sir, I am a renowned charioteer, skilled in the various parts of a chariot, all the particular parts of a chariot are fully known to me, so (the answer) would occur to me immediately.'

'Even so, Prince, if those who are learned nobles and learned brahmans and learned householders and learned recluses approach the Tathāgata and ask him a question they have constructed, (the answer) occurs to the Tathāgata immediately. What is the reason for this? It is, Prince, that the constitution of *dhamma* is fully penetrated by the Tathāgata, and because of his full penetration of the constitution of *dhamma* (the answer) occurs to the Tathāgata immediately.' [*Sā hi rājakumāra Tathāgatassa dhammadhātu suppaṭividdhā yassa dhammadhātuyā suppaṭividdhattā ṭhānaso v'etam Tathāgataṃ paṭibhātīti.*][38]

This passage asserts that the essential truths are continually open or accessible to the Buddha, so that he is able to answer any question concerning them immediately and unselfconsciously. He is, so to speak, in a state of constant clarity. Note that the *prati-bhā* construction suggests both this clarity or receptivity and his ability to speak without hesitation. In both respects the Buddha is the model, and it is to this that he calls others. When he asks them to 'let it be clear' (*pratibhātu*) he is not asking for a carefully prepared sermon but is asking that they speak from their own hard-won state of mental clarity. The states of mind in question here, which are chiefly involved in category (a) constructions, fit within the wisdom rather than the faith tradition in Buddhism and are portrayed as the fruit of ardent and progressive cultivation in morality, asceticism and meditation; such states, when achieved, are permanent and reliable, and may be called upon whenever necessary. Hence the Buddha need not wait for his Great Disciples to become 'inspired': he can ask them to 'let it be clear' (that is, speak fluently from clarity of mind) without fear that they will come up dry.

The second passage to be quoted concerns Vangīsa, the other model speaker. On one occasion, after he has given verses of praise for the Buddha, the latter asks him: 'Say now, Vangīsa, were these verses of praise for the Buddha, the latter asks him: 'Say now, Vangīsa, were these verses thought out by thee beforehand, or have they been revealed to thee just on the spot?' (*Kinnu te Vangīsa imā gāthāyo pubbe parivitakkita udāhu thānaso va tam patibhantī ti*?)[39] Vangīsa replies, 'Nay, lord, these verses were not thought out by me beforehand; they were revealed to me just on the spot.'[40] The Buddha then expresses his approval of such spontaneous versifying. As in the previous case, therefore, the ideal is not a laboriously and self-consciously constructed utterance but the free movement of the mind. But the inspired speech (*pratibhāna*) of Vangīsa is not the same, and has not the same source, as that of the Great Disciples whom the Buddha invites to give extemporaneous sermons. Not only is Vangīsa not an *arhat* when he gives his poetical out-

bursts, but one actually gets the impression that he is having some trouble adapting himself to the monastic life.[41] His *pratibhāna* comes not from outstanding wisdom or enlightenment but from his faith and his ability as an extempore poet. Before joining the Order he was a professional *kavi*, wandering from town to town 'drunk with poetic inspiration' (*kāveyyamatta*);[42] when he heard the Buddha preach he left the world, and his trade, to strive as a monk. With him be brought his gift of inspired versifying, which he used to praise the Buddha and his chief disciples as well as to encourage himself to his task. Inspiration is not his usual state of being but comes upon him at specific times, usually when he is moved by faith.

To sum up, we have in the *sūtra-pitaka* two major sorts of *prati-bhā* construction, which refer to two sorts of creative speech by people other than the Buddha, this speech being acceptable under certain circumstances as the basis of *sūtra*. These two kinds of creative speech share the important characteristic of coming freely from a state of mind different from, and higher than, the normal. They differ in these respects: the first kind tends to be connected with mental states that are ideally open to all who strive correctly, permanent, and indicative of wisdom; the second kind tends to be connected with mental states that arise from an inborn faculty (a natural gift), that are sporadic, and that are indicative of faith.

It must be remembered that however great and of whatever kind one's *pratibhāna*, in order to be acceptable as *sūtra* one's utterance had to be certified by the Buddha. Personal *pratibhāna* is hence subordinate to *buddhavacana*, and is in fact authoritative only when transformed into extended *buddhavacana*. One can see this position set forth in the *Uttaravipatti Sutta*, where the monk Uttara, who has preached a particular doctrine, is asked by Sakka (Indra), 'What then, sir—is this the venerable Uttara's own *patibhāna* or the word of the Lord, the Arahat, the Fully Enlightened One?'[43] Uttara's reply concludes with the words, 'whatsoever be well spoken, all that is the word of the Exalted One, arahant, the fully awakened One, wholly based thereon is both what we and others say.'[44]

It will be noted, however, that despite this bowing down to *buddhavacana*, the *Uttaravipatti* exemplifies a tendency in the understanding of *buddhavacana* that actually weakens it as an historically defined concept. For there is serious ambiguity in the statement that 'whatsoever be well spoken, all that is the word of the Exalted One.' This can mean that all of the good things in the tradition come from the Buddha, but it can equally well imply that *buddhavacana* is being redefined to mean 'whatsoever be well spoken', rather than meaning the actual words of Gautama. In other words, we may be witnessing a tendency to have *buddhavacana* defined as that speech which is of the greatest spiritual worth. This tendency is seen in other canonical statements aimed at giving criteria whereby to determine what is scripture. According to the 'Great Authorities' (*Mahāpadesa*),[45] for example, the status of the utterance in question is to be determined by checking it against existing *dharma* and *vinaya* to see if it harmonizes in import. If it does, it may be accepted; if it does not, it must be rejected. Formally, the *buddhavacana* ideal is again carefully upheld, but, despite some minor concern for the honesty of the transmitter and consequent

accuracy of the historical transmission, the drift of the scheme is to promote a model of *buddhavacana* based on meaning rather than history. Finally, there is the famous and beautiful passage from the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*:

> 'The doctrines, Upāli, of which you may know: "These doctrines lead one not to complete weariness (of the world), nor to dispassion, nor to ending, nor to calm, nor to knowledge, nor to the awakening, nor to the cool [*nibbāna*]"—regard them definitely as not Dhamma, not the discipline, not the world of the Teacher. But the doctrines of which you may know. "These doctrines lead one to complete weariness, dispassion, ending, calm, knowledge, the awakening, the cool"—regard them unreservedly as Dhamma, the discipline, the word of the Teacher.'[46]

Again there is no formal challenge to the *buddhavacana* criterion—the point of the scheme is to determine what is the word of the Teacher (or 'teaching of the Teacher', *satthusāna*—but now there are no historical checks at all and we are left with a purely functional understanding of *buddhavacaṅa*.

Before we conclude that traditional Buddhism had no sense of history, we should remember that the *sūtra-piṭaka* was *in fact* established as a stable body of literature quite early; after its establishment changes in existing *sūtras* tended to be minor and conservative, and little new *sūtra* was generated.[47] The conviction that the time when the Buddha revealed the truth was past and that no such revelation could come again (at least for a very long time) was, therefore, powerful. Hence it is fair to say that the concept of *buddhavacana*, historically understood, put strong limits on the contribution people's *pratibhāna* could make to the corpus of revealed truth. By and large, then, the religious community did indeed see itself as belonging to a closed tradition.

## Inspired speech in the Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā

In early Mahāyāna the relation between *buddhavacana* and *pratibhāna* is seen in a radically new way. Athough one may sometimes get the impression that nothing crucial has changed, a closer look reveals a startling break with traditional Buddhism. Herein, this issue will be addressed largely in the context of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*. This text is generally considered the earliest of the existing *sūtras* of the Perfection of Wisdom group and, in fact, one of the most ancient Mahāyāna *sūtras* we possess.[48] The defence of *sūtra* status found in it, as well as the understanding of the role of inspired speech, should not be taken as representative in every respect of early Mahāyāna—surviving texts from the period show great diversity, even on major doctrinal points—but they are nonetheless important as constituting one of the most sophisticated and systematic attempts to work through the problem.

One of the crucial passages is that which opens the *sūtra*. After the introductory formula the following words occur:

> The Lord said to the Venerable Subhuti, the Elder: May something be clear to you, Subhuti, on the subject of perfect wisdom and on behalf of the Bodhisattvas, the great beings—how the Bodhisattvas, the great beings, may go forth to perfect wisdom! [*Tatra khalu bhagavān āyusmantaṃ Subhūtim sthaviraṃ āmantrayate sma: pratibhātu te Subhūte bodhisattvānāṃ mahāsattvānāṃ prajñāpāramitām ārabhya yathā bodhisattvā mahāsattvāḥ prajñāpāramitāṃ niryāyur iti.*]
>
> Thereupon the Venerable Sariputra thought to himself: Will that Venerable Subhuti, the Elder, expound perfect wisdom of himself, through the operation and force of his own power of inspired speech born of wisdom, or through the Buddha's might? [*Atha khalu āyusmataḥ Śāriputrasyaitad abhavat: kim ayam āyusmān Subhūtih sthavira ātmīyena svakena prajñāpratibhānabalādhānena svakena prajñāpratibhānabalādhiṣṭhānena bodhisattvānāṃ mahāsattvānāṃ prajñāpāramitām upadeksyaty utāho buddhānubhāveneti?*]
>
> The Venerable Subhuti, who knew, through the Buddha's might, that the Venerable Sariputra was in such wise discoursing in his heart, said to the Venerable Sariputra: Whatever, Venerable Sariputra, the Lord's Disciples teach, all that is to be known as the Tathagata's work. For in the dharma demonstrated by the Tathagata they train themselves, they realise its true nature, they hold it in mind. Thereafter nothing that they teach contradicts the true nature of the dharma. It is just an outpouring of the Tathagata's demonstration of dharma. Whatever those sons of good family may expound as the nature of dharma, that they do not bring into contradiction with the actual nature of dharma.[49]

This passage begins the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* and all that follows in the text is to be read in light of it. It is a careful statement on the vexed issue of the Buddha's word versus independent and creative speech, and it is made with the status of this *sūtra* (and, probably, of Mahāyāna *sūtras* in general) in mind.

The Buddha immediately invites one of his disciples to speak. The central problem of the text, which is that of how the *bodhisattva* can become intimate with the perfection of wisdom, is to be set forth not by the Buddha but by someone delegated to speak on his behalf. Being now familiar with *prati-bhā* constructions as used in earlier Buddha literature, we know that when the Buddha invites Subhūti to speak, with the words 'may it be clear to you' (*pratibhātu te*), he is asking that a (doctrinal) discourse flow freely from Subhūti's purified consciousness. The invitation constitutes a certification before the event and indicates that the discourse is a form of extended *buddhavacana*. Two important points are, therefore, immediately suggested by the use of this construction: (1) the *sūtra* (and, perhaps, all Mahāyāna *sūtras*) is not simple *buddhavacana* but extended *buddhavacana*, that is, it is the speech of people other than the Buddha but is certified by him;[50] (2) this certified speech is the most independent and creative sort recognized, that which comes freely from, or through, the disciple's mind.

The next section of the passage gives Śāriputra's thoughts. He represents traditional Buddhism and puts into words its doubts about Mahāyāna; he wonders, in effect, whether Mahāyāna's authoritative discourses are not simply poetry and the work of poets. Does Subhūti, he asks, speak on his own authority and through his own power of extempore speech (*pratibhāna*) or through the power and authority of the Buddha? The question is not new to us, for we have seen it expressed in almost identical terms in the *Uttaravipatti Sutta,* to which there is surely an allusion here.[51]

Subhūti's answer, which concludes the passage, is likewise close to what is found in the *Uttaravipatti Sutta*. In the latter we are told that 'whatsoever be well spoken, all that is the word of the Exalted One, arahant, the fully Awakened One, wholly based thereon is both what we and others say', while in the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* we are told that 'whatever . . . the Lord's disciples teach, all that is to be known as the Tathagata's work [*tathāgatasya puruṣakāro*]', and we are assured that whatever these disciples teach 'is just an outpouring [*niṣyando*][52] of the Tathagata's demonstration of dharma'. The notion of the verification of the Buddha's *dharma* by the disciples as referred to in this passage raises serious questions about both the canonical and the Mahāyāna understanding of *buddhavacana.* If the disciples verify the *dharma* for themselves, it is indeed natural that 'thereafter nothing that they teach contradicts the true nature of *dharma*' (and the true nature of reality), but in this case it seems unnecessary and even misleading to say that what they teach is the Tathāgata's work or an out-pouring of his demonstration of *dharma*, except in a very indirect sense (that is, in the sense that their training and verification depend upon the Buddha's teaching). This leads us to consider the possibility that the process seen subtly at work in the canon is carried further in the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā*: *buddhavacana* (or the Tathāgata's demonstration of *dharma*) is not so much that which has been spoken by a particular individual at a particular time as it is that which is of the highest value from the religious point of view. We should not be surprised to find a shift in the meaning of *buddhavacana* in Mahāyāna, inasmuch as the movement is built in large part around a different vision of the Buddha.

The problem we are grappling with is that of the relationship of *buddhavacana,* both simple and extended, to historical fact, as seen by the Mahāyānists. The early Mahāyāna *sūtras* certainly portray the Buddha as preaching, as do they continually show him certifying the speech of others (note the familiar *sādhu*, *sādhu kulaputra*—'well said, well said son of good family!'): How did Mahāyāna view the relationship between these 'fictional' events and historical reality? Is it simply a case of this religious community certifying its own productions by putting concocted words into the mouth of the Buddha? Is it, after all, nothing but a case of forgery?

It takes little reflection to realize that when the early Mahāyānists defend their *sūtras* as *buddhavacana* they do not mean by this that these texts are the speech of 'historical Buddha'. There is no attempt made to have people believe

this. Although their *sūtras* are in some respects modelled on the old *sūtra* form it is the deviation from the old *sūtras* that is more striking—if they are forgeries they are very poor ones. If deception were the aim we could expect a decent attempt at protective mimicry: the new texts should be fit into one of the *āgamas* of the *sūtra-piṭaka*, they should be made to harmonize in style and length with the traditional *sūtras*, and they should certainly not proclaim themselves as new revelation![53] In order to see how the Mahāyānists viewed the situation, therefore, we need to dig more deeply. Let us begin by investigating early Mahāyāna views on the presence of the Buddha, for in the canon this presence was seen as prerequisite to all *buddhavacana,* whether simple or extended. This will then be followed by a discussion of the *dharma*-preacher, the inspired speaker who played such an important role in the origins of this religious movement.

There are two main positions taken with regard to the presence of the Buddha, which I shall call the theistic and the non-theistic. Roughly speaking, these may be said to belong to the faith and wisdom traditions respectively.

The theistic viewpoint can be found to some degree in all early Mahāyāna *sūtras* but is most boldly championed in the *Lotus Sūtra* (*Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra*). The Buddha, it is held, is still present, has never gone away.[54] Only the faithful are aware of this. For this group of people the holy presence of the Lord is recaptured, the sacred time when the Buddha walked among men and talked to them is sought and realized. The religious quest becomes a striving to hear the Buddha (and other Buddhas), to see Him, to be near Him. Śākyamuni Buddha and the countless Buddhas who support him are, therefore, fully present and capable both of speaking and of certifying what others say. Not only can *sūtra* legitimately be produced, but this revelation supercedes that given through the Buddha's corporeal form; that was the first turning of the wheel of the *dharma*, this is the second.[55]

The non-theistic viewpoint is central to the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* and is hence of more concern to us here. It must first be acknowledged, however, that the theistic and faith-dominated attitude is by no means lacking in the *sūtra*. The requirement that the words of the text be certified is felt strongly, and there are assurances that this requirement is met through the continual presence of the persons of Śākyamuni and other Buddhas. More specifically, the following points are made on the subject of the required presence of the Buddha, some of which need not imply theism but some of which probably do:

(1) Those who now pursue the perfection of wisdom do so because they were (in a previous lifetime) in the Buddha's presence during his career in the world.[56] Furthermore, while he was alive the Buddha knew what would happen in the future: he knew and saw the individuals who would one day seek perfect wisdom and he rejoiced in them (approved, certified them).[57]

(2) Those who now study the perfection of wisdom in this world have been reborn here from other world systems, where they were in the direct presence of

other Buddhas and heard from them the perfection of wisdom.[58] They are, therefore, not only persons once in the presence of Śākyamuni, but also persons fresh from experiencing the presence of other Buddhas.

(3) These other Buddhas not only supported them in the past, but continue to do so. The followers of the perfection of wisdom are known, seen, protected and upheld (hence, of course, certified) here and now by these Buddhas.[59]

(4) While Śākyamuni was, formally speaking, supposed to have passed away, his continued presence was an experiential reality to this group of people, and occasionally the text breaks out of the formal structure and proclaims that He is still accessible to assist and support (and thus to certify).[60]

(5) One may hear and see these persons (the various Buddhas) in dreams and visions and thereby be assured of their presence and approval.[61]

These points show the extent to which the Mahāyānists in question met the certification problem in a way reminiscent of the *Lotus Sūtra*. I suspect that a certain degree of theism is, in fact, indispensable to the religious structure found in the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā*; nevertheless, it is generally given a role that is subsidiary to, and merely supportive of, a quite different solution to the problem of certification and presence, one which is basically non-theistic. We can get to this solution by asking two fundamental questions and seeing how the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* answers them. The questions are: Is there that which is even more worthy of attention and honour, even more rightly regarded as authoritative, than the Buddha? and, Did the Buddha appoint a successor to whom one could turn after his passing away? The answer given to the first question is: That by means of which the Buddha (and all Buddhas) became enlightened—that by virtue of which he became *buddha*—fulfils these conditions. And this is none other than liberating wisdom (or the perfection of wisdom, *prajñāpāramitā*).[62] Liberating wisdom is hence the mother of the Buddhas, the guide of the Buddhas, and so on.[63] The function of a Buddha is precisely to make known such wisdom to others, and this function implies its priority. The answer to the second question is: The Buddha refused to appoint a human successor, saying instead that the *dharma* would succeed him.[64] The essence of the *dharma* is, again, liberating wisdom.[65] The two points converge here. The Buddha arose in the world because of his training in the perfection of wisdom; after his passing away one must take refuge in that very perfection of wisdom. 'For he will understand that in the past, when he was a Bodhisattva, the Tathagata trained in the perfection of wisdom; that also he should train in it; that she is his Teacher. When the Tathagata is present in the world and when he has disappeared into final Nirvana, the Bodhisattvas should betake themselves to this very perfection of wisdom.'[66]

The implication of these statements is that although the Buddha is no longer with us in the flesh he has, so to speak, given us a Comforter,[67] which is the perfection of wisdom. This means that the door to revelation is not closed, for it can come from this present and accessible liberating wisdom. Great care is taken in the text to have a complete transfer of functions from the Buddha to the perfection of wisdom, so that what the former once did the latter now does.[68] The per-

fection of wisdom is in fact the Teacher, and turns the wheel of the *dharma.*[69] Inasmuch as it manifests all of the essential functions of the Buddha, through it the Buddha lives on. 'One should consider, Ānanda, that as long as the perfection of wisdom is current in the world the Tathāgata still abides, the Tathāgata still teaches the *dharma.*'[70] 'One should consider those beings who hear . . . the perfection of wisdom, Ānanda as living in the presence of the Tathāgata.'[71] It follows that when the text refers to 'the Buddha's words' it does not primarily refer to what Gautama said in the sixth or fifth century B.C. but to the fresh revelation obtained via perfect wisdom. But how can the perfection of wisdom, which is not a person, speak? And how can it certify the speech of others? It does so through the medium of the *dharma*-preacher.

A thorough treatment of the *dharma*-preacher (*dharmabhāṇaka*)[72] is out of the question here. Many of the mysteries of the origins of Mahāyāna are bound up with this figure, and it will be some time before the facts have been sorted out. Yet several of his main functions seem clear. Sociologically described, they are: to win converts to the movement, to train the converted in accordance with the main principles of the movement, and to promote and organize the central cult of the movement.

The initial task of the preacher is to raise up *bodhisattvas.* This means, among other things, winning people to the group that constitutes Mahāyāna. The conversion occurs through the evocation of a particular religious experience, that of 'the rise of the aspiration for Buddhahood'[73] (*bodhicittotpāda*). This experience defines Mahāyāna as a group, for one who has had it is a *bodhisattva* and belongs to the Mahāyāna, while one who has not had it is no *bodhisattva* and no member of the movement. When we speak of the spread of Mahāyāna in this early period we are speaking of the progressive evocation of this experience among people. The principal setting for conversion seems to have been that of the sermon or discourse, involving the preacher and his group of hearers. The preacher, himself inspired, would attempt to bring about *bodhicittotpāda* in his hearers. It is likely that this dynamic was a source of much religious fervour in the early stages of the movement.

It is further evident that conversion became a self-perpetuating process. A *bodhisattva,* one converted to the movement, had as one of his prime tasks the saving of others, and the saving of others came to be thought of as bringing of them to Buddhahood.[74] This meant that the sacred duty of all *bodhisattvas* was to set people on the path to Buddhahood—to give them the gift of *bodhicitta.* Hence, in theory, every member of the movement was called to be a preacher (which perhaps explains the expression *bodhisattva dharmabhāṇaka* used occasionally as if the former implied the latter.)[75] In reality, some people took the task to heart more than others, but the movement became, in any case, thoroughly evangelical.

If the hearers were already *bodhisattvas,* the preacher's task was to instruct them in the fundamentals of Mahāyāna and guide them through the dangers that faced the newly converted. These dangers were many. There was the danger of

traditional Buddhists, who tried to convince the *bodhisattvas* of their folly,[76] the danger of rival Mahāyāna groups with different scriptures and methods;[77] there was the moral danger of bitterness and ill-will toward those outside the group[78] as well as of pride among the converted who, having undergone a radical identity change, now fancied themselves great beings (*mahāsattva*) with nothing further to accomplish.[79] But the greatest of dangers was that essential to *bodhisattva*-hood, that which all *bodhisattvas* had to undergo, namely, journeying in birth and death. In a religion that had been dedicated to helping everyone leave off wandering (*saṃsāra*) through the rebirth process, this journey was looked on with fear and revulsion, and those who undertook it willingly were widely regarded as fools.[80] The preacher had a part to play in instructing the *bodhisattva* in how to travel through rebirth without becoming lost (and without forgetting that he was a *bodhisattva,* which was a possibility acknowledged), so that he could eventually mature to full Buddhahood.

There were several specific cults in which the early Mahāyānists were involved, including the relic-cult, the *bodhisattva*-cult[81] and the book-cult. Although the *dharma*-preacher was probably important to all of them, it is with the last one, the cult of the book, that he is especially connected.[82]

There was almost certainly such a thing as Mahāyāna before there were Mahāyāna *sūtras*, but we know little about it. As the movement first becomes visible to us it is closely tied with its own texts, which are clearly meant to supercede the body of traditional Buddhist *sūtras*.[83] There are some obvious reasons why the Mahāyānists would be tempted to abandon the traditional *sūtras*. These latter were quite useless for inspiring people to the *bodhisattva* path since they did not recognize this as a generally valid course of action and, in fact, were directed toward teaching people how to put an end to the journey in birth and death with the greatest possible speed (the aborting of the *bodhisattva*). Likewise, they were useless as instruction manuals for the converted. The Mahāyāna *sūtras* were definitely seen as filling these needs.[84] In addition, however, there were social and emotional needs to be met, and the new *sūtras* became installed as objects of worship, concrete and appropriate symbols of the new movement. Indeed, as Mahāyāna first appears to us (in, I believe, its secondary stage of development) it is less a single movement than 'a loose federation of a number of distinct though related [book-] cults, all of the same pattern, but each associated with its specific text'.[85] The reachieved presence of the Buddha, whether theistically or non-theistically conceived, was concretely symbolized by the physical book in which the *sūtra* was recorded; just as the Buddha was felt to be present in the *stūpa* that held his relics, and as worship at the *stūpa* enabled one to enter sacred space and time, so was it with the ritual centred around the book, which at least some Mahāyānists wished to see rival relic-worship.[86]

Now the *dharmabhāṇaka* seen in the early Mahāyāna *sūtras* is most commonly a preacher with a text. Each *sūtra* proclaims itself as the ultimate expression of the *dharma*, so that by '*dharma*-preacher' is meant primarily the

preacher of the *sūtra* in question. That is, when the *Lotus Sūtra* praises the *dharmabhānaka* it is praising the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkabhāṇaka*, the preacher of the *Lotus Sūtra*. So the question naturally arises as to the precise function of the preacher with regard to the *sūtra*. Without attempting a final solution to this very complicated problem, I would suggest that three different roles of the preacher can be distinguished. First, there is the preacher as the bearer of the physical book in which the *sūtra* is written. He carries the book and promotes its function as the central symbol in worship. As the bearer of a sacred object that is the concrete manifestation of the Buddha, he is himself sacred. 'He carries the Tathāgata on his shoulder, Bhaiṣajyarāja, who after having copied this Dharmaparyāya and made a volume of it, carries it on his shoulder. Such a one, wherever he goes, must be saluted by all beings with joined hands, must be honoured, respected, worshipped . . . '[87] In this case the sanctity and authority of the preacher are entirely dependent on the book. Secondly, however, there is the preacher as a repository of the *sūtra*, a repository distinct from and on a par with the physical book. The *dharmabhāṇaka*, having memorized the text, can recite it without reference to the book, and his importance, while still derivative, is here dependent on the *sūtra* which he bears in his mind rather than on the sacred object he carries.[88] Lastly, there is the *dharmabhāṇaka* as one who acts independently of the *sūtra*. He can, for example, act as a teacher and a scholar;[89] it is when he is acting as an inspired speaker, however, that what he says is truly authoritative. Through his inspiration he gets directly in touch with, and communicates, the truth that the *sūtra* itself tries to communicate. This is especially clear in the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā*. The *bodhisattva* Sadāprarudita, for example, is told when searching for the perfection of wisdom: 'If you practise thus, son of good family, it will not be long before you hear the perfection of wisdom, either from a book or from the person of a monk who is a *dharmabhāṇaka*, and that person from whom you hear the perfection of wisdom you should regard as your Teacher.'[90] The *dharmabhāṇaka* in question here is not simply one who has memorized this particular *sūtra* (though he may well have done this), but one who has within him, so to speak, the perfection of wisdom itself. When Sadāprarudita finally finds his *dharmabhāṇaka* (Dharmodgata) he does not find a mere reciter but an extempore speaker who rocks his hearers with inspired speech born of his intimacy with liberating wisdom. This particular school of Mahāyāna certainly did not make the mistake of reducing the perfection of wisdom to a particular *sūtra*: the perfection of wisdom could be expressed in eight thousand *ślokas*, or in twenty-five thousand *ślokas*, or in more than twenty-five thousand or less than eight thousand.[91] Or it could be expressed by the inspired preacher.

The precise nature of inspired speech depends upon the religious framework in which the inspiration occurs. It has been suggested that both theistic and non-theistic structures are found in early Mahāyāna. Within the former the inspired speaker, the *dharmabhāṇaka*, is primarily one who achieves communion with the divine persons, for whom he then acts as a channel and messenger. He

attempts to live open to the sacred realm; the Buddha appears before him in visions and dreams,[92] comforting him and assuring him that he acts correctly,[93] and he intermingles with *devas* and other supernatural beings,[94] receiving their help and protection.[95] He hears the Buddha expound the *dharma* and he catches the true meaning.[96] When he preaches, his accuracy and fluency are assured by Buddhas and *devas*.[97] His exegesis of his text is given authority by the Buddha, who guarantees the validity of his interpretation.[98] Thus supported he may answer all public challenges and questions confidently and without hesitation.[99] He is the deputy or messenger of the Buddha;[100] more, *qua* bearer of the holy word, he is the Buddha incarnate.[101] He is to be treated with great respect,[102] and those who spurn him and his message are doomed.[103] It is thus that the *dharma-bhāṇaka* appears, for example, in the *Lotus Sūtra*, where he is both a transmitter of the *sūtra* and an extempore speaker.

In the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* the situation is somewhat different. As has been argued, this text belongs in large part to a non-theistic wisdom tradition. In accordance with this the notion of inspiration is somewhat different from that just described. It will be remembered that at the opening of the *sūtra* the Buddha asks that Subhūti 'let it be clear' (*pratibhātu*), and that in this way the latter is made the instrument of extended *buddhavacana*. In fact, Subhūti's words are certified by the Buddha in all of the three ways discussed earlier.[104] Without question he is the model *dharma*-preacher for this text. As Śāriputra says, 'In the first rank of the preachers of dharma should the Venerable Subhuti be placed.'[105] Hence it will pay to consider more closely his function and chief characteristics.

Here is what characterizes Subhuti's speech: in style, it is fluent and brilliant; in content, it is rooted in the perception of the emptiness of all things. When asked by the Buddha to preach to the *bodhisattvas* about the perfection of wisdom, he replies, 'I who do not find anything to correspond to the word "Bodhisattva", or to the words "perfect wisdom",—which Bodhisattva should I then instruct and admonish in which perfect wisdom?'[106] Likewise, witness the following exchange with the *devas*:

> Then those *Gods* thought: What should one wish those to be like who are worthy to listen to the doctrine from the Holy Subhuti? *Subhuti* read their thoughts, and said: Those who learn the doctrine from me one should wish to be like an illusory magical creation, for they will neither hear my words, nor experience the facts which they express.
>
> *Gods*: Beings that are like a magical illusion, are they not just an illusion?
>
> *Subhuti*: Like a magical illusion are those beings, like a dream. For not two different things are magical illusion and beings, are dreams and beings. All objective facts also are like a magical illusion, like a dream. The various classes of saints, from Streamwinner to Buddhahood, also are like a magical illusion, like a dream.

> *Gods*: A fully enlightened Buddha also, you say, is like a magical illusion [*sic*], is like a dream? Buddhahood also, you say, is like a magical illusion, is like a dream?
> *Subhuti*: Even Nirvana, I say, is like a magical illusion, is like a dream. How much more so anything else!
> *Gods*: Even Nirvana, Holy Subhuti, you say, is like an illusion, is like a dream?
> *Subhuti*: Even if perchance there could be anything more distinguished, of that too I would say that it is like an illusion, like a dream. For not two different things are illusion and Nirvana, are dreams and Nirvana.
> Thereupon the Venerable Sariputra, the Venerable Purna, son of Maitrayani, the Venerable Mahakoshthila, the Venerable Mahakatyayana, the Venerable Mahakashyapa, and the other *Great Disciples*, together with many thousands of *Bodhisattvas*, said: Who, Subhuti, will be those who grasp this perfect wisdom as here explained?
> Thereupon the Venerable *Ananda* said to those Elders: Bodhisattvas who cannot fall back will grasp it, or persons who have reached sound views, or Arhats in whom the outflows have dried up.
> *Subhuti*: No one will grasp this perfect wisdom as here explained . . . For no dharma at all has been indicated lit up, or communicated. So there will be no one who can grasp it.[107]

Śāriputra describes Subhūti's ability well when he says that 'in whatever way he may be questioned, he finds a way out; he does not swerve from [the correct teaching about] the true nature of Dharma, and he does not contradict that true nature of Dharma'.[108] Again, Śakra says, 'Whatever that holy Subhuti may expound, that he expounds with reference to emptiness [*śūnyatām ārabhya*], and he does not get stuck anywhere. The holy Subhuti's demonstration of dharma does not get stuck anywhere, no more than an arrow shot into the air.'[109] In response to this comment by Śakra, the Buddha affirms that 'whatsoever Kauśika, is clear to Subhūti the Elder is clear to him from the standpoint of emptiness' (*yad yad eva hi Kauśika Subhūteh sthavirasya pratibhāti tat tad eva Kauṣika śūnyatām ārabhya pratibhāti*).[110] And in the same passage he affirms that one who speaks thus speaks the *dharma*, the Buddha's word.[111] In other words, it is through such *pratibhāna* that *buddhavacana* is transmitted to the community.

Through the figure of Subhūti, therefore, the following ideal inspired speaker is suggested. The inspired speaker, the preacher of *dharma,* is one who has personally realized the emptiness of things and who, because this perception is continually open to him, can speak with complete freedom and fluency on any occasion, revealing the true nature of the world to others directly from his own vision. In this way he teaches others how to carry out the *bodhisattva* task, for this task not only remains a valid and serious business despite the apparently

nihilistic emptiness-perception,[112] but can in fact be successfully completed only with the help of such perception. A *bodhisattva* who tries to make the journey in birth and death without this vision will never succeed. Thus the *dharmabhāṇaka* fulfils one of his most important roles, that of helping *bodhisattvas* through *saṃsāra* to Buddhahood. Furthermore, since what the text refers to as intimacy with the perfection of wisdom (and skill in means, *upāyakauśalya*) is precisely this ability to carry out the *bodhisattva* task while standing in emptiness, the preacher's function is that of communicating perfect wisdom, bringing it to life, giving it flesh. In the theistic inspiration contexts the divine person speaks through the preacher; in this non-theistic context the preacher personifies, or brings to personhood, the source of truth and successor to the Buddha, which is liberating wisdom. Since liberating wisdom has taken over the function of the Buddha, what the inspired preacher reveals on behalf of it through his *pratibhāna* can be considered *buddhavacana.*

The issue of the preacher as an inspired speaker, as opposed to a mere reciter, arises again here. On the one hand the *dharmabhāṇaka* is portrayed in the early Mahāyāna *sūtras* as a preacher with a text, while on the other hand the ideal *dharma*-preacher suggested through the figure of Subhūti is strictly an extempore speaker. Which of these corresponds better to historical reality? I shall not attempt to answer this difficult question here, beyond suggesting that both figures represent historical types but from different periods. Subhūti represents, I believe, an early type of *dharma*-preacher, whereas the *bodhisattva dharmabhāṇaka*, who is often mentioned and to whom much of the exhortation of the early *sūtras* is addressed, is a more recent arrival. But it is important to note that even the latter figure is not a mere reciter; he too has need of *pratibhāṇa*, as the following passages show.

> And further, Kauśika, the son or daughter of good family who repeats this perfection of wisdom will be approached by many hundreds, thousands, and hundreds of thousands of gods, out of their desire to hear the *dharma*. And those gods, listening to the *dharma,* will have a mind to bring *pratibhāna* to that *dharmabhāṇaka*. Even when the *dharmabhāṇaka* has no desire to speak the gods, out of respect for *dharma,* will have a mind to induce *pratibhāna*, so that that son or daughter of good family will feel impelled to speak.[113]

> This Subhūti, should be known as the first act of Māra, namely that *pratibhāna* will not arise in the *bodhisattvas*, the great beings, who speak the perfection of wisdom, until a long time has passed. And that *pratibhāna* will be scattered as soon as it is born.[114]

> And this too, Subhūti, should be known as an act of Māra against those *bodhisattvas,* the great beings, namely that when the deep perfection of wisdom is being spoken, taught, indicated, explained, learned, recited,

> repeated or even simply written down, many *pratibhānas* will arise, which will cause confusion of thought.[115]

*Pratibhāna* is seen here as a previous yet fragile possession, which is not controlled by the preacher but comes to him, or does not come to him, depending upon whether he is under the influence of the gods or the Evil One. Although the gods do not speak through him, they are given an important role in bringing inspired speech to him, a role that has little precedent in Buddhist literature but many precedents in non-Buddhist Indian religion.[116] As for Māra, he can either suppress inspiration or use it against the preacher, in the latter case having him overwhelmed with *pratibhānas* (a rare instance of the plural form, possibly implying that the term refers only to the receptive power of the mind here, as suggested in Conze's many flashes of insight').[117]

It will be remembered that in the canon two types of *prati-bhā* construction were found, which corresponded to two different understandings of inspired speech. Neither the clear distinction in construction nor, more importantly, the distinction in understanding of inspiration has survived entirely intact in Mahāyāna.[118] This much of the distinction, however, remains: a state of constant clarity attained through ascetical, moral and meditational practice can be distinguished from an occasional state of self-transcendence in which truth discloses itself and flows through one freely, finding immediate expression in language, In the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* both are pictured. Subhūti typifies the first, while the *bodhisattva dharmabhāṇaka* being instructed to go out and preach, with his delicate *pratibhāna* as just described, typifies the second. Whether this is the difference between the ideal and the actual or between two different ideals is hard to say, but I cannot help but feel that the latter is more likely the case, and that Subhūti is the older and progressively less powerful ideal. That is, in early Mahāyāna there is a tendency, especially in the faith tradition (to which, for example, the *Lotus Sūtra* belongs), to abandon the gradual clarification of the mind attained through meditation and asceticism for moments of vision, ecstasy and inspiration. If this is so, the sort of inspired speech referred to in the canon with type (b) constructions, sporadic or occasional inspired speech, rises in Mahāyāna to a position of much more prominence than it had in the canon.

However important this *pratibhāna*, it remains true that the *bodhisattva dharmabhāṇaka* generally has a text—a Mahāyāna *sūtra*. I suspect that things were different in the earlier stage to which the figure of Subhūti belongs. The earliest *dharma*-preachers of Mahāyāna very likely had no Mahāyāna *sūtra* (though they may have had a text of a different kind); on the contrary, it was probably through them that the *sūtras* first made their appearance. Much of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā*, for example, may well record the discourses of *dharma*-preachers or, what comes to much the same thing, may be modelled on such discourses. Likewise, the *dharmabhāṇakas* probably continued to play a major role in the ongoing generation of *sūtras* within Mahāyāna. If this is so (and I shall

not attempt to prove it here), Mahāyāna has brought about a truly radical shift in the relationship between *buddhavacana* and *pratibhāna*: no longer is *buddhavacana* the truth that once came to the community, to the formulation of which the *pratibhāna* of people other than the Buddha contributed a small part (as extended *buddhavacana*) but beyond which such *pratibhāna* no longer has any authority; rather *buddhavacana* is that which comes to the community *now* and comes not otherwise than through *pratibhāna*.

No religious tradition, of course, is completely and indiscriminately open to new revelation. The valuing of any particular formulation will inevitably result in its exerting some degree of influence on, and control over, further formulations. But once the door had been opened in the early stages of Mahāyāna it was never completely closed. As long as Mahāyāna survived in India it continued to generate new *sūtras*, the total number of which is almost staggering. East Asian Mahāyāna was more cautious, but even here, in an altered form, the tradition remained open in certain sects. Beyond a doubt Mahāyāna wrought a lasting religious revolution.

The present section may be summarized as follows. In the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā*, 'the word of the Buddha' means primarily the truth as revealed to man. One seeks this truth not by determining what a particular fleshly being once said, but by gaining access to it here and now. The non-theistic option presented to us in this connection is that such truth comes through liberating wisdom. One can become intimate with this wisdom, embody it, put it into words. The person who does this—the *dharma*-preacher, the inspired speaker—is the delegate of liberating wisdom and is hence presented as a speaker of extended *buddhavacana*.

One could protest that the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* continues, like other Mahāyāna *sūtras*, to speak of the Buddha, and shows him saying things (and certifying things) that he never in fact said. Most importantly, is it not this fictional Buddha who abdicates to the perfection of wisdom? Is not the abdication, and the religious structure that goes with it, simply the production of the community? The answer to this is two-fold. First, it is undoubtedly true that in Mahāyāna the appropriate means of expressing truth in scripture was seen to be story, not history. That is in keeping with the complete break with historical consciousness that Mahāyāna makes. Hence one must be prepared to look for truth symbolically expressed rather than in one-level descriptions of fact in Mahāyāna *sūtras*. Secondly, I believe that the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* presents itself as, and in fact is, not the result of mere authorship but of the *pratibhāna* of *dharma*-preachers who felt themselves inspired by, and speaking on behalf of, liberating wisdom.

## Conclusion

The Mahāyānists certainly did not ignore traditional Buddhist terminology and concepts, but they used them in a new way. As is often the case with revolutionaries, many of the terminological and conceptual resources available to them were in the tradition with which they were breaking. One still finds the word of

the Buddha and the certification of the Buddha given a central place in *sūtra*, therefore, but these were understood in a way that led to the recognition as scriptual of words quite unacceptable according to these criteria as traditionally formulated. While formally revelation is still said to come through the founder, in fact it now comes through members of the community, who feel they can gain direct access to the truth.

In Mahāyāna we see both a re-assertion of pre-Buddhist religious structures and a reflection of newer developments in Indian religion (such as devotionalism and *avatāra* mythology). In its valuing of story over history, its revering of divine persons, and its insistence that revelation can never be shut off—that it can break through at any time via inspired men and women—Mahāyāna is much more typical of Indian religious systems than is traditional Buddhism. Within the context of Indian religion it is not the affirmation of the continuing presence of the divine Buddha in the *Lotus Sūtra* that strikes one as odd, but the small voice in the *Kathāvatthu* protesting, 'Was he not born at Lumbinī?'[119] Perhaps it is the very rarity of 'historical consciousness' in Indian religion, and the fact that one feels this attempt to maintain a closed tradition was doomed from the start, that makes the *Kathāvatthu* utterance seem rather tragic and precious. At the same time, of all the attempts made in early Mahāyāna to open the tradition to the recognition of new revelation without changing the essentials of the religion, that of the Perfection of Wisdom school is surely one of the most impressive.

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## Notes

1 Three expressions used in this paper should be explained at the outset. 'Revelation' refers to the uncovering, disclosure, discovery, becoming clear, of truth that liberates or saves; it is also sometimes used as a synonym for 'the revealed truth'. The term thus used need not entail theism. 'Traditional' Buddhism (as well as 'traditionalist') refers to pre-Mahāyāna Buddhism. In using this term I adopt the position of an observer contemporary with the rise of Mahāyāna. It is from such a standpoint—certainly not from the present day perspective—that it makes sense to distinguish this group as traditional. Finally, the term 'canon' is used herein, with some reservations, to refer to the body of scripture (the *Tripiṭaka*) acknowledged by this traditional Buddhism.

2 I am not here interested in the semantic range of the term '*sūtra*' for Buddhists during the period in question. It is quite possible that they would have acknowledged the existence of *sūtras* within non-Buddhist religious traditions, referring in such cases to a literary *genre*. I am concerned only with *sūtras* that they regarded as

authoritative. To avoid the continual use of such awkward expressions as 'canonical *sūtra*', 'scriptural *sūtra*', 'Buddhist *sūtra*' and so on, I speak simply of *sūtra*.

3 In later times many Mahāyāna apologists were not above claiming that the Mahāyāna *sūtras* had been kept in secret places till conditions in the world of men were favourable, at which time they were brought forth. See, e.g. Tāranātha's account in Lama Chimpa and Alaka Chattopadhyaya, trans., Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya (ed.) *Tāranātha's History of Buddhism in India*, Simla, Indian Institute of Advanced Study 1970, p. 98.

4 *AP*, 328. Reference to the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* (*AP* in the notes) is, unless otherwise noted, to Rājendralāla Mitra (ed.), *Ashṭasāhasrikā, a Collection of Discourses on the Metaphysics of the Mahāyāna School of the Buddhists*, Calcutta, Asiatic Society of Bengal 1888, and the English translation of Conze, Edward Conze, trans., *The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines and Its Verse Summary*, Bolinas, Calif., Four Seasons Foundation 1973. Mitra's spelling is normalized and punctuation is added.

5 SN II, 267 and AN I, 72–73. (This is noted by Conze, *The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines*, p. xiv.) Reference to the Pali Canon is to the Pali Text Society's edition in Roman script (with occasional normalization of spelling).

6 The passage in question (*AP*, 328–329) says that the *bodhisattva* who is thrown into anxiety and doubt by the traditionalist criticisms is not 'irreversible' (*avinivartanīya*), which means, sociologically considered, that he is a backslider.

7 See, e.g. *Sad.*, 272; *Lotus*, 259–260. Reference to the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra* is, unless otherwise noted, to the Sanskrit edition of Kern and Nanjio (H. Kern and B. Nanjio (eds.), *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, St. Petersburg: [Bibliotheca Buddhica 10], 1908–1912—*Sad.* in the notes) and the English translation of Kern (H. Kern trans., *Saddharma-Puṇḍarīka, or, The Lotus of the True Law*, New York, Dover 1963, [originally published by Clarendon Press, Oxford in 1884 as Vol. XXI of 'The Sacred Books of the East]—*Lotus* in the notes).

8 Reference to the Buddhist scriptures in Chinese is to the Taishō edition of Watanabe and Takakusu (T in the notes). The accounts of the First Council are found in the following places:

*Theravādin Vinaya: Cullavagga*, Section 11 (*Pañcasatikā-Khandhaka*)
*Mahsm̄ghika Vinaya*: T 1425: vol. 22, 489 ff.
*Mahīśāsaka Vinaya*: T 1421: vol. 22, 190 ff.
*Dharmaguptaka Vinaya*: T 1428: vol. 22, 966 ff.
*Sarvāstivādin Vinaya*: T 1435: vol. 23, 445 ff.
*Mūlasarvāstivādin Vinaya*: T 1451: vol. 24, 402 ff.

Translations of the main parts of these accounts (excepting that from the *Mūlasarvāstivādin Vinaya*) can be found in Jean Przyluski, *Le Concile de Rājagṛha*, Paris, Paul Geuthner 1926–1928. My account of the story is a generalized one that is accurate for most versions. Although I believe the *buddhavacana* criterion for *sūtra* to be implicit even in the oldest accounts, which are certainly pre-Mahāyāna, it does become more explicit in the later accounts, which may well be post-Mahāyāna their present forms.

9 The term '*dharma*' is often used to refer to *sūtra* in the early literature, and this usage is customary in the accounts of the First Council.

10 Ānanda recites the entire *sūtra-piṭaka* in the Mahāsāmghika and Mūlasarvāstivādin accounts, and apparently also in the Sarvāstivādin account.

11 Ānanda is referred to as a 'receptacle of the *dharma*' in the account of the First Council given in the Introduction to the *Ekottara Āgama* preserved in Chinese (T 125: vol. 2, 549, c 11).

12 T 1451: vol. 24, 406, b 19–20 (*Mūlasarvāstivādin Vinaya* version). My translation.
13 T 1425: vol. 22, 491, c 5–6 (*Mahāsāmghika Vinaya* version). My translation.
14 Ibid., c 25. My translation.
15 T 1451: vol. 24, 407, c 3–6 (*Mūlasarvāstivādin Vinaya* version). My translation.
16 See, e.g., T 1425: vol. 22, 491, c 20 ff. (*Mahāsāṃghika Vinaya* version) and T 1451: vol. 24, 407, b 23–24 (*Mūlasarvāstivādin Vinaya* version).
17 Étienne Lamotte, *Histoire du Bouddhisme Indien*, Louvain, Publications Universitaires 1958, p. 179.
18 The narrowest of the definitions is that from the *Mahāsaṃghika Vinaya*, quoted below, p. 7.
19 This method of expanding *buddhavacana* is one of the foundations of Abhidharma. It is also found in Mahāyāna texts as one means of justifying the production of Mahāyāna *sūtras*. Examples of this sort of *sūtra*-discourse in the canon are: MN I, 108 (T 26: vol. 1, 603 b), MN III, 192 (T 26: vol. 1, 696 b), AN IV, 120, AN V 46 (T 99: vol. 2, 143 a), AN V, 225 (T 26: vol. 1, 734 a), SN II, 47 (T 99: vol. 2, 95 b), SN III, 1 (T 99: vol. 2, 33 a; T 125: vol. 2, 573 a), SN IV, 93 (T 99: vol. 2, 56 c).

Throughout the following section on the early canon I have based my research primarily on the Pali Canon but have in each case sought in addition for the corresponding passage in the *āgamas* preserved in Chinese. We can be thus assured that we are not dealing with matters peculiar to the Theravādin tradition. Where such corresponding passages have been found—with the help of Akanuma Chizen's *The Comparative Catalogue of Chinese Āgamas and Pāli Nikāyas*, Tokyo, Hajinkaku-Shobo 1958—they are indicated in brackets after the Pali reference. In each case the Chinese passage agrees with its Pali equivalent on the point in question unless there is indication to the contrary. Reference is generally to the first page (or, in the case of the Chinese, section) of the *sūtra*.
20 'Sāriputta, I may teach Dhamma in brief [*saṅkhittena*], and again I may teach it in detail [*vitthārena*], and I may teach it both in brief and in detail. It is those who understand that are hard to find.' AN I, 133 (T 99: vol. 2, 255 b). The translation is by F. L. Woodward, *The Book of the Gradual Sayings* (*Anguttara-Nikāya*), London, Luzac 1932, I, 116.
21 Examples of Śāriputra expanding utterances are: SN II, 47 (T 99: vol. 2, 95 b); SN III, 1 (T 99: vol. 2, 33 a; T 125: vol. 2, 573 a).
22 Some examples are: DN II, 316 (T 1: vol. 1, 42 b); MN I, 212 (T 26: vol. 1, 726 c); MN I, 299 (T 26: vol. 1, 788 a); MN III, 7 (T 26: vol. 1, 653 c); MN III, 124 (T 26: vol. 1, 475 a); AN III, 186 (T 26: vol. 1, 454 a); SN I, 71 (T 99: vol. 2, 335 c); SN II, 112 (T 99: vol. 2, 81 a); SN II, 205 (T 99: vol. 2, 300 c).
23 The Pali phrases quoted here are from an old and very important passage describing the rise of a Buddha in the world. The passage is common; see DN I, 100 (T 1: vol. 1, 83 c) for a typical occurrence.
24 MN III, 29.
25 MN III, 8, translated by I. B. Horner, *The Middle Length Sayings* (*Majjhima-Nikāya*), London, Luzac 1959, III, 58–59. (T 26: vol. 1, 653 c).
26 E.g.: MN I, 108 (T 26: vol. 1, 603 b; T 125: vol. 2, 743 a); MN I, 212 (T 26: vol. 1, 726 c; T 125: vol. 2, 710 c); MN III, 192 (T 26: vol. 1, 696 b); AN IV, 27; AN IV, 162; AN V, 225 (T 26: vol. 1, 734 a); SN I, 71 (T 99: vol. 2, 335 c; T 100: vol. 2, 392 c); SN II, 47 (T 99: vol. 2, 95 b); SN II, 205 (T 99: vol. 2, 300 c; T 100: vol. 2, 415 b).
27 This is commonly used in connection with *prati-bhā* constructions, discussed in the next section of the paper.
28 E.g.: MN II, 157; AN III, 186 (T 26: vol. 1, 454 a); AN III, 292; AN III, 314 (T 99: vol. 2, 143 b); AN III, 340 (T 99: vol. 2, 128 c); AN III, 355; AN V, 41 (T 26: vol.

1, 572 c); AN V, 46 (T 99: vol. 2, 143 a); AN V, 121; SN II, 112 (T 99: vol. 2, 81 a); SN IV, 103; SN V, 293 (T 99: vol. 2, 139 a).

29 E.g.: MN I, 114 (T 26: vol. 1, 604 c, 17 ff.); MN III, 25 ff.; AN V, 229 (T 26: vol. 1, 735 b, 20 ff.). See also the *Kassapa-saṁyutta*, SN II, 194 ff., especially SN II, 210 ff. (T 99: vol. 2, 302 a; T 100: vol. 2, 416 c).

30 T 1415: vol. 22, 336, a 21–23. My translation.

31 See J. Gonda's excellent treatment of this in his *The Vision of the Vedic Poets*. The Hague, Mouton 1963, pp. 14 ff. and throughout.

32 Ibid., p. 318.

33 The cases are: DN III, 209 (T 1: vol. 1, 49, c 3–4); MN I, 46; MN I, 354 (T 99: vol. 2, 316, b 6–7—not certain that the construction is present); MN II, 31 (T 26: vol. 1, 783 c–784 a—not certain that the construction is present); AN V, 122–123; AN V, 125; SN I, 155; SN II, 36–37; SN II, 198 (T 99: Vol. 2, 299 c 16; T 100: vol. 2, 414, b 1)—this passage also occurs elsewhere; SN IV, 184 (T 99: vol. 2, 316, b 6–7).

34 AN V, 122 ff., translated by F. L. Woodward, *Gradual Sayings* (*Auguttara-Nikāya*), London, Luzac 1936, V, 83–84.

35 Ibid., 124.

36 The cases are: AN III, 239; SN I, 81 (T 99: vol. 2, 306, b 12–14; T 100: vol. 2, 399, c 16–17); SN I, 189 (T 99: vol. 2, 332, a 18–20; T 100: vol. 2, 462, c 1–3); SN I, 190 (T 99: vol. 2, 329, c 5–6; T 100: vol. 2, 457, a 3–4); SN I, 191 (T 99: vol. 2, 330, c 2–3; T 100: vol. 2, 457, c 16–17); SN I, 192 f. (T 99: vol. 2, 332, b—with some changes, but see lines 20–21); SN I, 194 (T 99: vol. 2, 329, b 15–16; T 100: vol. 2, 456, c 15–16); SN I, 195 (T 99: vol. 2, 329, c 22–23; T 100: vol. 2, 457, a 19–20); SN I, 195 (T 99: vol. 3, 329, a 28–29; T 100: vol. 2, 456, b 28–29).

37 SN I, 191–92, translated by C. A. F. Rhys Davids, *Kindred Sayings* (*Saṅyutta-Nikāya*), London, Luzac 1950, I, 243–244. (T 99: vol. 2, 330, c 4–18; T 100: vol. 2, 457, c 18–28).

38 MN I, 395–396, translated by I. B. Horner, *The Middle Length Sayings* (*Majjhima-Nikāya*), London, Luzac 1957, II, 63–64.

39 SN I, 193, translated by C. A. F. Rhys Davids, *Kindred Sayings*, I, 245. (T 99: vol. 2, 322, b 20–28).

40 Ibid.

41 See the Vaṅgīsa *Suttas*, SN I, 185 ff. (T 99: vol. 2, 329, 9 ff.).

42 My translation. See SN I, 196 (cf. T 99: vol. 2, 331, c 24; T 100: vol. 2, 462, b 5) and *Theragāthā*, verse 1262. See also SN I, 110 (T 99: vol. 2, 285, c 16–18; T 100: vol. 2, 382, b 22–25) and the translator's comments, *Kindred Sayings*, I, 138, n. 6 regarding this term.

43 AN IV, 163. My translation.

44 Ibid., 164, translated by E. M. Hare, *Gradual Sayings* (*Anguttara-Nikāya*), London, Luzac 1935, IV, 112.

45 DN II, 123 (T 1: vol. 1, 17b–18a); AN II, 167.

46 AN IV, 143, translated by Hare, *Gradual Sayings*, IV, 96–97.

47 This we determine from a comparison of the surviving *sūtra-piṭakas* of the different sects. The changes are certainly greater than that which the Christian canon underwent after being fixed (in part because the *sūtra-piṭaka* was preserved orally for centuries in most sects) but there is, on the whole, considerable resistance to change observable, the major exception being the *Ekottara Āgama* preserved in Chinese. The creativity of the latter is almost certainly due to its connection with Mahāyāna. References and further remarks can be found in my unpublished doctoral dissertation, *A Study of the Śrāmanyaphala Sūtra*, Harvard University 1978.

48 See Conze's essays 'The development of Prajñāpāramitā thought' and 'The Composition of the Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā in his *Thirty Years of Buddhist Studies*,

Columbia, South Carolina, The University of South Carolina Press 1968, as well as his *The Prajñāpāramitā Literature*, The Hague, Mouton 1960. See also, e.g. Hajime Nakamura, 'Historical studies of the coming into existence of Mahāyāna Sūtras', *Proceedings of the Okurayama Oriental Research Institute,* II (1956), 2. Note that in the present paper the Mahāyāna *sūtras* are treated as wholes, no attempt being made to establish different historical levels. Our arguments will, of course, need eventually to be tested through such detailed historical analysis.

49 *AP*, 3–4. Conze's translation with some changes.

50 I believe this to be indicated by the passage under consideration despite the fact that the Buddha himself is, if the text is considered as a whole, the *sūtra*'s chief speaker.

51 See p. 314 in Graeme MacQueen, 'Inspired speech in early Mahāyāna Buddhism I', *Religion* 11:4 (1981).

52 For the reading *nisyando* see U. Wogihara (ed). *Abhisamayālaṃkār'ālokā Prajñāpāramitā-vyākhyā*, Tokyo 1932–1935, p. 30.

53 Such proclamations are being made all the time. The announcement of the second turning of the wheel of the *dharma* is a good example (below, p. 52).

54 See especially the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, chapters 10, 15.

55 *Sad.*, 69–70 (*Lotus,* 70); *AP,* 203.

56 *AP,* 226–228.

57 *AP,* 228–229.

58 *AP,* 176–177, 226–228, 282–283, 299, 459–460.

59 *AP*, 222–225, 414, 447–448, 459.

60 E.g., *AP*, 224–225, 251–252.

61 This is said less explicitly in the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* than in the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, but that dreams were considered important is clear (e.g. *AP*, 380–382), and that visions of various sorts were common is likewise clear (see especially the story of Sadāprarudita, chapters 30–31), though they are looked upon with some misgivings in most parts of the text (e.g. *AP,* 337–338, 393–394).

62 *AP,* chapter 4, especially p. 100.

63 *AP,* 92, 253–255.

64 There are a number of well known canonical passages that make this point, e.g. DN II, 154; MN III, 7ff.; SN III, 120. In the *Aṣṭasāhasrīkā* one sees an awareness of this tradition and an attempt to build upon it (see, e.g. *AP,* 460–464).

65 *AP*, 460–464.

66 *AP*, 61. Conze's translation with some changes.

67 I suggest this parallel hesitantly, having not yet worked out its implication and its worth.

68 *AP,* 61–63, 73–75, 171, 462–463, 528.

69 *AP,* 171, 462, 528.

70 *AP,* 529. My translation.

71 Ibid. My translation.

72 This is the most common term for the preacher, though we also see the term *dharmakathika* used (*AP,* 30).

73 An interpretive rather than a literal translation of *bodhicittotpāda*.

74 The identification of saving or liberating with bringing to Buddhahood appears not to be aboriginal in Mahāyāna, but it was a fairly early development, at least in some groups (as seen in the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*).

75 *Sad.*, 268–269 (*Lotus*, 257).

76 See especially *AP,* chapter 17.

77 In the *AP*, for example much effort is spent in trying to explain why some *bodhisattvas* (Mahāyānists) oppose the perfection of wisdom. See especially pp. 176–184.

78 E.g., *AP*, 420; *Sad.*, 285 (*Lotus,* 271).

79 In the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* the problem of pride arises chiefly in connection with the 'saved' rather than the mere converted. The saved are those who are 'irreversible' (*avinivartanīya*), meaning fully assured of attaining Buddhahood. In this connection see especially pp. 385ff.
80 *AP*, 329.
81 The term '*bodhisattva*-cult' refers here to the worship of specific *bodhisattvas* (such as Avalokiteśvara) as divine persons.
82 See Gregory Schopen's article, 'The phrase "*sa pṛthivīpradeśaś caityabhūto bhavet*" in the *Vajracchedikā*: notes on the cult of the book in Mahāyāna, *Indo-Iranian Journal*, XVII (1975), 147–181.
83 More accurately, in the early stages of the movement the Mahāyāna *sūtras* were regarded by their proponents as superceding the traditional *sūtras as scripture for Mahāyānists* (the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* shows evidence, for example, of the existence of Mahāyānists who continued to use the traditional *sūtras* as scripture, and considerable energy is spent arguing against this position—see chapter 11 in particular, and p. 460); later, or perhaps simply in other groups, when the *bodhisattva* path was seen as that to which everyone was called, the traditional *sūtras* were often regarded as entirely otiose.
84 It is evident at *Sad.*, 261 (*Lotus*, 249–250) that this text was supposed to have a role in bringing about *bodhicittotpāda*. See also *Sad.*, 328 (*Lotus*, 312) and *Sad.*, 330 (*Lotus*, 315), where this is given as one among several spiritual gifts associated with the text. The *Aṣṭasāhasrikā*, on the other hand, makes comparatively little mention of *bodhicittotpāda* (although see p. 209), seeming to presuppose this elementary attainment and presents itself as an advanced training manual (e.g. p. 139).
85 Schopen, 'Notes on the cult of the book', p. 181.
86 See ibid., throughout.
87 *Sad.*, 227 (*Lotus*, 216).
88 One has the option of bearing the perfection of wisdom in a book or in one's memory. See, e.g. *AP*, 284.
89 We hear of the *dharma*-preacher's teaching of *dharma (dharmabhānakasya dharmadeśanā—AP*, 98) and learn that he may privately teach a willing *dharma*-hearer (*dharmaṣravanika—AP*, 243–245). In addition we learn that he is anxious to understand and interpret his text correctly. See e.g. *Sad.*, 372–374 (*Lotus*, 351–352).
90 *AP*, 482–483. My translation. The options are that the perfection of wisdom be found *pustakagata* (in a book) or *dharmabhāṇakasya bhikṣoḥ kāyagata* (in the person or body of a renunciant *dharma*-preacher). The latter expression seems to refer sometimes to memorization of the text—as at *AP*, 284—but here it appears to have a wider signification. Note also that the *dharmabhāṇaka* can be either a monk or a layman. See, e.g. *Sad.*, 227 (*Lotus*, 216).
91 For a description of the range of the literature in question see Conze's *The Prajñāpāramitā Literature*.
92 E.g., *Sad.*, 235 (*Lotus*, 223); Sad., 237–238 (*Lotus*, 225); *Sad.*, 294–295 (*Lotus*, 278–279); *Sad.*, 337–338 (*Lotus*, 320–321).
93 Ibid., as well as *Sad.*, 230–231 (*Lotus*, 219–220).
94 *Sad.*, 235, 237 (*Lotus*, 223–225); *Sad.*, 367 (*Lotus*, 347).
95 E.g. *AP*, 202.
96 *Sad.*, 359 (*Lotus*, 340); *Sad.*, 373 (*Lotus*, 352); *Sad.*, 393–394 (*Lotus*, 369).
97 *Sad.*, 235, 237–238 (*Lotus*, 223, 225); *AP*, 83–84 (translated below, p. 59).
98 *Sad.*, 372–374 (*Lotus*, 351–352); *Sad.*, 393–394 (*Lotus*, 369).
99 *Sad.*, 234–235 (*Lotus*, 223–225); *Sad.*, 283–284 (*Lotus*, 270); *Sad.*, 366–367 (*Lotus*, 347). Cf. *AP*, 84. One cannot but think of passages such as Matthew 10:16–20 in this connection.

100 *Sad.*, 226–227 (*Lotus*, 216).
101 *Sad.*, 226 (*Lotus*, 215); *Sad.*, 343 (*Lotus*, 326–327).
102 E.g., *Sad.*, 343 (*Lotus*, 326–327) as well as chapter 10 of the text.
103 E.g., *Sad.*, 227 (*Lotus*, 216); *Sad.*, 482–483 (*Lotus*, 439); *AP*, chapter 7.
104 Certification after the event is seen typically at *AP*, 321, 401, 446. Certification before the event is seen in the invitation to speak that opens the *sūtra* discussed above, pp. 25ff. Certification of Subhūti as a person can be seen at *AP*, 154 and through the words of others but with the Buddha's obvious approval, at *AP*, 6, 30, 306.
105 *AP*, 30.
106 *AP*, 7 (Conze's rather free translation).
107 *AP*, 39–41.
108 *AP*, 31. The brackets are Conze's.
109 *AP*, 454.
110 *AP*, 454–455. My translation.
111 Ibid. Conze's characterization of Subhūti on p. xii of *The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines* is well worth noting:

> Where *Subhūti* talks it is the Buddha himself who speaks through him . . . He is the principal channel through whom the Buddha's inspiration travels downwards. The theory is stated quite clearly at *Rgs* I 2–4 (= *A* I 4), and also at *A* I 25, II 44. It is the Buddha's might (*anubhāva*), his 'sustaining power' (*adhiṣṭhāna*), or as we might say, his 'grace' which leads to his revelation of the true doctrine, either through his own words or through inspired men as his mouthpiece. These men in their turn gain access to the revelation by their holy lives and their spiritual and meditational practices.

The characterization is not inaccurate, but it describes Subhūti, and the *dharma*-preacher in general, strictly within the theistic framework.
112 'Emptiness-perception' does not refer to the perception of emptiness but to the perception of reality from the standpoint of emptiness.
113 *AP*, 83–84. My translation.
114 *AP*, 232. My translation.
115 *AP*, 240. My translation.
116 See Gonda, *The Vision of the Vedic Poets*, pp. 17ff. and throughout. Possibly the legend of Brahma persuading the Buddha to preach after the latter's enlightenment provides a precedent of sorts, but, although the Buddha is portrayed in the canon as communing with the gods and receiving information from them, I hardly think they induce inspired speech in him. Where he is described as having *pratibhāna* (see especially SN I, 136, which deals with the post-enlightenment events) it is not portrayed as dependent on the gods.
117 His translation of *AP*, 240.
118 Occasionally there is some divergence in form from the traditional *prati-bhā* schemes, as at *AP*, 18–19. More frequently, the traditional structure is preserved, *prati-bhā* forms being used with similes—as at *Sad.*, 101 (*Lotus*, 99) and *AP*, 214ff. (cf. the canonical passages at MN I, 31–32; MN I, 230)—or verses of praise for the Buddha—as at P. L. Vaidya (ed) *Samādhirājasūtra*, Darbhanga, Mithila Institute, 1961, 83ff. The substantive *pratibhāna* is moderately common in the Mahāyāna *sūtras* and describeswhat becomes a standard attainment of the *bodhisattva*. Yet it should not be thought that *prati-bhā* forms dominate the Mahāyāna *sūtras*; they are but one indicator of the religious transformation that Mahāyāna represents.
119 Shwe Zan Aung and C. A. F. Rhys Davids, trans., *Points of Controversy*, London, Luzac 1915, p. 323.

# 44

# CHANGING THE FEMALE BODY

## Wise women and the Bodhisattva career in some *Mahāratnakūṭasūtras*

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This essay will deal primarily with an interesting event that occurs in some Mayāyāna Buddhist sūtras: "changing the female body." As primary sources, four sections from the Chinese translation of the *Mahāratnakūṭasūtra* have been used, and comparisons have been made with passages from the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra*, the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa* and the *Srīmālāsiṃhanādasūtra*. The four *Mahāratnakūṭa* scriptures used are:

1. *Ta-pao-chi ching, Miao-hui t'ung-nü hui* (*Mahāratnakūṭasūtra, Sumatidārikāparivarta*), T. 11.310(30) (hereafter cited as the *Sumati-sūtra*)[1]
2. *Ta-pao-chi ching, Hêng-ho-shang yu-p'o-i hui (Mahāratnakūṭusūtra, Gaṅgottaropāsikā-parivarta*), T. 11.310(31) (hereafter cited as the *Gaṅgottara-sūtra*)[2]
3. *Ta-pao-chi ching, Wu-kou shih p'u-sa ying-pien hui (Mahāratnakūṭasūtra, Vimaladattā-bodhisattva-pratibhāna-parivarta*), T. 11.310(33) (hereafter cites as the *Pure Gift Sūtra*)[3]
4. *Ta-pao-chi ching, Ching-hsin t'ung-nü hui* (*Mahāratnakūṭasūtra, Viśuddhiśraddhādārikā-parivarta*), T. 11.310(40) (hereafter cited as *Pure Faith's Question*)[4]

This study makes use of only a few of the Mahāyāna sūtras which deal with "changing the female body," and leaves untouched the vast majority of Mahāyāna texts which have women as central figures or which contain important discussions about women. My intention has been to make an intensive examination of a selected group of texts, in order to identify some important characteristics of the "changing the female body" theme.

Although it is assumed that all the sūtras discussed in this eassay were originally composed in India, most do not survive in their original languages. All exist however in Chinese translations, which I have used and translated for this essay.

The scriptures provide information on the evolution of Mahāyāna thought in India, and the existence of Chinese translations of them also suggests some things about Chinese assimilation of Indian Buddhist thought and about the impact of these translated scriptures on Chinese ideas and attitudes. The span of time over which the translations of the *Mahāratnakūtasūtras* were made is very great, more than 500 years, and the impact made by the various translations discussed here is difficult to trace. I will, therefore, confine myself in this essay to an examination of the contents of the sūtras themselves, and to a few brief remarks on the circumstances of their translation into Chinese.

## The Mahāratnakūṭasūtra and Mahāyāna Buddhist attitudes toward women

There are many Mahāyāna Buddhist sūtras which have something to say about women. Some are quite hostile; many of these uphold the old clerical biases against women which have cropped up from time to time in the various Buddhist sects. Har Dayal, in his *The Bodhisattva Doctrine in Buddhist Sanskrit Literature* (pp. 223–4), catalogues some of the more unpleasant responses to women found in Mahāyāna texts.

But there are many Mahāyāna scriptures which insist that only the ignorant make distinctions between the religious aspirations and intellectual and spiritual capacities of men and women. This position is the only one which is consistent with the Mahāyāna doctrine of the emptiness of all phenomena. This is the doctrine which lies at the heart of many Mahāyāna scriptures, beginning with the Perfection of Understanding Sūtras (*Prajñāpāramitāsūtras*). It is the position of the *Mahāratnakūṭa* texts discussed in this essay.

The *Mahāratnakūṭasutra* is a large, composite sūtra, in 49 sections, as it now appears in the Chinese and Tibetan Buddhist canons. The 49 sections were originally separate sūtras, and were apparently first grouped together under the single title *Mahāratnakūṭasūtra* in T'ang China.[5] Several of the 49 sūtras were originally translated much earlier, some as early as the Later Han Dynasty (2nd century A.D.). During the T'ang Dynasty, under imperial auspices and with a team of Chinese assistants, the Indian monk-scholar, Bodhiruci, gathered together and examined all extant translations of the 49 sūtras. He re-translated those which, in his opinion, were not of good quality and provided original translations of those which were not yet available in Chinese. The work was carried out from 706 to 713 A.D. during the reigns of Emperors Chung-tsung and Jui-tsung, the two sons and successors of Empress Wu Tse-t'ien.

Bodhiruci himself translated for the first time two of the *Mahāratnakūṭa* sūtras discussed here, the *Gaṅgottara-sūtra* and *Pure Faith's Question*, and retranslated the *Sumati-sūtra* and the *Śrīmālāsiṃhanāda*. Soon after his arrival in China from India, in 693 A.D., he had participated in the translation of other sūtras which contain important statements on women: the *Ratnamegha-sūtra* and the *Avataṃsaka*. Bodhiruci was a monk and scholar of some reputation, who

had come to China at the invitation of T'ang Empress Wu Tse-t'ien, and for twenty years he received the support and patronage of the Empress and of her two sons and successors. In return Bodhiruci lent his prestige to the Empress' claim to be legitimate ruler of China in her own right: she was the only woman in Chinese history who ever ruled in her own name as *emperor* of China, not merely as regent for a prince.[6] Although she has been castigated since by Confucian historians because she was a woman and a usurper, she seems to have been regarded by her subjects as a capable and constructive ruler. She claimed to be the legitimate ruler, as well, on the grounds that she was a Bodhisattva and a Buddhist universal monarch, whose rule as a woman was the most appropriate response the Bodhisattva could find to the needs of the people at that time and in that place.[7] The Empress' Buddhist supporters, with at least the tacit approval of Bodhiruci, argued further that the Empress' reign had been predicted by the Buddha himself in certain Mahāyāna sūtras (the *Ratnamegha, Pao-yü ching*, and the *Mahāmegha, Ta-yün ching*).

That Mahāyāna scriptures could be used to argue for the right of a woman to wield absolute power in one of the world's great empires reveals that some leading Buddhist scholars in China were quite aware of the positive Mahāyāna attitudes toward women. They could have cited several other scriptures in their cause. I cannot assess Bodhiruci's personal attitudes toward women, but I think it is important to recall that, at a period in Chinese history when the prominence of women was a timely concern, Bodhiruci helped make available to Chinese readers a number of Mahāyāna scriptures which argue for the spiritual and intellectual equality of women.

Dharmarakṣa (Chu Fa Hu) had done the same for an earlier audience. Among the more than 150 translations by the great 3rd–4th century master are several Mahāyāna scriptures on women—e.g., *Foshuo a-tu-kuan-wang nü a-shu-ta p'u-sa ching* (T. 12.337), *Fo-shuo wu-kouhsien-nü ching* (T.14.562), *Fo-shuo fan-chin-nü shou-i ching* (T.14.567), the *Sumati-sūtra*, and several others.[8] He also made the first translation of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra*, and his translation does include the famous Dragon-princess episode, which will be discussed in this essay. He retranslated the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa* as will, but his translation has been lost. Dharmarakṣa was a great propagator of Mahāyāna Buddhism in China. Inevitably, while he was making various aspects of Mahāyāna thought accessible to Chinese readers through his very faithful translations, he was also making available current Mahāyāna views on women. Whether or not this had any immediate impact, the information had been made available and was there to exert whatever influence it might on sympathetic minds for centuries after.

## Women's bodies and the characteristic marks of the Great Man

A spectacular event climaxes several Mahāyāna sūtras on women: the female protagonist causes her own body to change abruptly from female to male.[9] To a

modern woman who reads them, this is a most disconcerting feature of these scriptures. The women who change have already shown themselves, in the texts, to be in command of a highly developed comprehension of Dharma (truth). Why, one must ask, should they have to admit to a supposed biological inferiority and undergo a saving sexual metamorphosis? This phenomenon requires a closer investigation.

In Buddhist tradition, although it is often recognized that a woman can attain liberated understanding, it is asserted that there are five states of existence in the world for which her female body renders her unqualified: she is barred from becoming a Buddha,[10] a universal monarch (*rāja-cakravartin*), a Śakra-god, Brahmā-god or a Māra.[11] For all of these five, maleness is an indisputable part of their being: could the gods Śakra, Brahmā or Māra be other than male? And as is well known from Buddhist literature, both the Buddha and the *cakravartin* conform to a specific physical type, the Great Man or *mahāpuruṣa*, who is also very specifically male. Numbered among his 32 characteristic marks (*lakṣaṇā*), which identify him as the Great Man, is that of having the penis covered with a sheath.[12]

The 32 major and 80 minor marks of the Great Man are the visible characteristics which reveal that he has accumulated great merit by the performance of an enormous number of specific virtuous actions over an enormous period of time. Visibly, a woman's body does not testify to these accomplishments, and her physical characteristics, which anyone can see, had to prohibit her from being a Great Man, whether he was a universal monarch or a Buddha. The 32 marks were, in Buddhist tradition, the key to visual identification of a Buddha, and were indispensable to the depiction of the Buddha in art and to the visualization of the Buddha in meditation. But in Mahāyāna Buddhist literature, visual evidence of Buddhahood came to be regarded as of limited relevance. The 32 marks are not necessarily taken literally—for example, as the *Diamond Sūtra* argues, the Tathāgata cannot be seen by his marks, rather he is to be known from his characteristic of having no marks.[13] The *Ta-chih-tu-lun*[14] explains that from the point of view of conventional understanding the Buddha has 32 marks, but from the point of view of ultimate truth or perfected understanding there are no marks whatever. Moreover, there are two paths which the Buddhist may cultivate, the way of merit (*puṇya*) and the way of perfected understanding (*prajñā*); for the former, the 32 marks are relevant, for the latter they are not. The *Ta-chih-tu-lun* goes on to argue that other characteristics of sentient beings, such as being pure or good, male or female, etc., which are conventionally regarded as real, are actually relative in the same sense as the 32 marks of the Great Man, and when one has attained perfect understanding these too can be "destroyed." That is, one can recognize that these supposedly real characteristics are mere designations (*prajñapti*) and do not define what is real. The 32 marks of the Great Man and the characteristics maleness, femaleness, and the rest, do, however, serve a purpose in this world as we live in it; they are not aberrations, and to speak of them is not—necessarily—wrong.

It is the argument of this essay that because Mahāyāna Buddhist writers recognized that from the ultimate standpoint the 32 marks of the Great Man and the characteristics maleness, femaleness and the rest are not real, but they are very relevant to life in this world for most sentient beings and thus "true" from the conventional point of view, the question of what women were traditionally thought able and unable to do had to be confronted. Certainly the Mahāyānist could not ignore the fact that there was a strong tradition in Buddhism that women were limited by their biological characteristics. The question had to be faced. How could it be handled most effectively?

In order to understand what these four scriptures reveal about the Mahāyānist views of women, one should know first what the texts are about. Summaries of the *Sumati-*, *Pure Gift-*, *Gaṅgottara-* and *Pure Faith's Question-sūtras* follow.

### *(1) Sumati-sūtra*[15]

While preaching to an assembly of monks and Bodhisattvas on the Vulture Peak near the city of Rājagṛha, the Buddha is addressed by Sumati, the 8-year-old daughter[16] of a householder of that city. This child had, in previous existences, made offerings to the Buddhas and accumulated merit. She asks the Buddha to resolve her doubts concerning certain aspects of Bodhisattva practice, and asks him a question in ten parts which he then answers in ten tetrads in prose and verse (total of 40 items). She asks: (1) how can the Bodhisattva be born with a beautiful appearance that delights everyone, (2) how attain great wealth, (3) how keep a retinue that will not be dispersed, (4) how be reborn by transformation on a 1,000-petalled lotus in the presence of the Dharma-king,[17] (5) how obtain the bases of supernormal power[18] so that one can travel to Buddha-lands and revere all the Buddhas' (6) how to be free from ill-will and envy; (7) how to speak so that those who hear will have confidence in what one says, and practice it; (8) how to avoid wrongdoing, (9) how to be beyond Māra's reach, and (10) how at the moment of death to see the Buddha standing before one preaching the Dharma so that one will never again fall into an unfortunate rebirth.[19]

The Buddha replies at some length that to accomplish these ten things the Bodhisattva must above all develop to the highest degree right attitude and conduct toward others in order to help them advance toward liberation; give untiringly to others; make offerings to the Buddhas, Buddha-images and stūpas; teach; and attain supreme realization.[20] Having received the Buddha's instructions, Sumati resolves to fulfil all the 40 disciplines he has set for her.

Mahāmaudgalyāyana[21] then speaks up, remarking that the discipline the Buddha has taught is difficult; therefore how can Sumati, a small girl, accomplish it?[22] Sumati then performs two acts of truth:[23] "If I now speak the truth, that I am one who can carry out these 40 practices, then because of me may all the countless world-systems quake six times, heavenly flowers rain down and musical instruments sound of themselves." This happens, as she has said it. Then: "If my words are true and not false, that before long I am to be a Tathā-

gata, Arhat, Samyaksaṃbuddha, may everyone in this assembly turn the color of gold." This too happens and Mahāmaudhalyạyana commits himself to the Bodhisattva way, for it must be the best of ways since it makes it possible for an 8-year-old girl Bodhisattva to do as Sumati has done.

At this point, Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva[24] challenges Sumati's understanding in a series of six questions (eight in Bodhiruci's text):

> (1) "In what dharma do you abide that there should be manifested such a response (to your words)?" Sumati: "Dharma cannot be reckoned, therefore there is no abiding anywhere[25] . . . you should not ask this. (2) . . . in no dharma is there any abiding or any doubt or any saying 'this is right, this is wrong.' " (3) Mañjuśrī: "Did the Tathāgata originally perform no actions?" Sumati: "Like the moon reflected in water, like a dream or a mirage or an echo deep in the mountains—the Tathāgata's original actions are like this." (4) Mañjuśrī: "By accumulating these things it is possible to attain Buddhahood, is it not?" Sumati: ". . . There is no difference between wise and foolish actions. All dharmas are the same . . . whether it is 'true dharma' or 'false dharma' there is no abiding anywhere and no grasping and no letting go, (for) emptiness[26] has no form at all." (5) Mañjuśrī: "How many are there who can explain this meaning?" Sumati: ". . . The transformations which a magician can make are limitless. So, too, are confidence in and understanding of this dharma." (6) Mañjuśrī: "If I originate actions without transformation and without illusion, what dharma is thereby united to the Way?" Sumati: ". . . The condition of all dharmas is without either 'being' or 'non-being.' To reach Tathāgatahood is neither a uniting nor a dispersing (of dharmas)."
>
> (T. 12.334, pp. 77.c.12–78.a.3)

Very pleased at these replies, Mañjuśrī praises Sumati, and the Buddha then says she had conceived the aspiration to attain enlightenment aeons ago and has just now attained the tolerance of the notion that dharmas do not arise.[27] Mañjuśrī thereupon asks, "Why have you not changed your female body?" and Sumati replies, "It cannot be apprehended[28], for dharmas are neither male nor female. But now I must remove your doubts . . . If it is true that I shall attain Tathāgatahood . . . may I now . . . change into a man." And immediately she turns into a young novice monk. Sumati then makes a resolve concerning her future Buddha-land, that in it there will be nothing having to do with Māra, no hells and no "women's demeanor."[29] And she adds, "If I shall accomplish this, let my body be like that of a 30-year-old monk." This, too, occurs. More resolves having to do with her Buddha-land follow. The Buddha then makes the prediction that Sumati-Bodhisattva will before long become a fully enlightened Buddha. Finally he proclaims the virtues of studying and preaching this sūtra, various members of the audience reach new levels of attainment on the path to enlightenment, and all are delighted at what they have heard.

### *(2) Pure Gift sūtra*[30]

At one time the Buddha was staying in the Jeta grove at Śrāvastī, with a large entourage of monks and Bodhisattvas, all Arhats. One morning eight disciples (*ti-tzu, śrāvaka*), Śāriputra, Mahāmaudgalyāyana, Subhuti and others, and eight Bodhisattvas, including Mañjuśrī and Avalokiteśvara, set out together on a morning's alms rounds. Each of the sixteen resolves to bring a specific blessing to the people of the city of Śrāvastī while begging his food. Śāriputra resolves that by the power of his deep concentration (*san-mei, samādhi*) all shall hear the Four Noble Truths preached, Mahāmaudgalyāyana that all shall be free of the Māras, Mañjuśrī that everything in the city shall send forth the sound of emptiness, signlessness, wishlessness, etc. Each of the others makes a resolve of similar scope, appropriate to his own special accomplishments.

Approaching the city the mendicants meet the daughter of King Prasenajit, Pure Gift,[31] aged 12 years, who, with a company of 500 women and 500 Brāhmaṇas, is going forth from the city to perform a Brahmanic rite. Considering the mendicants an inauspicious sight, the Brāhmaṇas wish to turn back, but Pure Gift begins to praise the Buddhists and the Buddha. When the Brāhmaṇas chastise her for this, she reveals that seven days after her birth 500 gods had appeared before her and proclaimed the virtues of Buddha, Dharma and Saṃgha, because, seeing into her heart, they realized she was ready for this instruction. They described the Buddha's own person in considerable detail, and what they described was the Great Man (*mahāpuruṣa*) endowed with his characteristic marks.[32] From that time forth, says the princess, she has constantly recalled the Buddha[33] as he was described to her, and day and night only looks upon all the Buddhas. She has gone to hear the Buddha preach the Dharma as often as possible, has become detached from all worldly things and is entirely devoted to the Three Jewels. At this, the 500 Brāhmaṇas conceive the aspiration to become fully enlightened Buddhas.

Pur Gift's father, the king, who has come upon the scene and heard her words, asks Pure Gift why she is sad and displeased with her life. She answers:

> "Great king, are you not aware of the sufferings of existence (*shêng-szu, saṃsāra*), of the pain resulting from the aggregates[34]—the frailty of the body and desirous thoughts? Whatever one does is like illusion. Life does not stop for a moment . . . It is like trying to sleep peacefully among poisonous snakes . . . Since I have seen the Victor and Lord . . . I have conceived the aspiration which will make me attain Buddhahood . . ."[35]

Pure Gift then turns to the eight disciples and eight Bodhisattvas, and poses a question to each about the special mastery reputed to be his. She begins with Śāriputra, who is first in understanding, and asks:

> "Is your understanding constructed or not-constructed?[36] If it is constructed then it is a thing which can be produced and destroyed, and is a dharma which is false. If it is unconstructed it lacks the three marks . . . for it does not come into being. If it does not come into being, then it cannot come to be associated with the one who understands, for it is entirely non-existent."
>
> (T.12.338, p. 91.c.16–25)

Śāriputra is rendered speechless, then tells Mahāmaudgalyāyana that he cannot reply because Pure Gift has asked about the unconstructed, which cannot be expressed verbally.[37]

Pure Gift turns next to Mahāmaudgalyāyana, who is first in mastery of the bases of supernormal powers (*shēn-tsu, ṛddhipāda*). She asks:

> "When you establish the bases of supernormal power, do you have the notion of persons or of dharmas? If of persons . . ., a person is empty and not real, thus the bases of supernormal power are also empty. If of dharmas . . ., dharmas are not created and what is not created cannot be grasped. Because they cannot be grasped, there can be no notion of them."
>
> (T.12.338, p. 91.c.26–92.a.4)

Mahāmaudgalyāyana, too, is silenced.

Moving from one disciple to the next, Pure Gift silences them all, and then turns to the eight Bodhisattvas, beginning with Mañjuśrī, who is here called first among those who have confidence in and understand what is most profound. She asks:

> "Is (enlightened understanding) profound because of the profundity of the 12 causes,[38] or is it because of the profundity of its self-existence?[39] If it is because of conditioned arising . . . conditioned arising has no 'coming' or 'going.' It is impossible to discern by means of visual-consciousness, or by hearing, smell, taste, touch or mind-consciousness . . . If it is because of the profundity of its self-existence . . . there are none who can penetrate this self-existence." Mañjuśrī: " 'Reality-limit'[40] . . . is *called* profound." Pure Gift: " 'Reality-limit' has no limits . . . (and) is not to be understood." Mañjuśrī: "If there can be no knowledge, there will be perverted views. 'Reality-limit' is a conventional designation only." Pure Gift: "Absence of knowledge means there are also no perverted views . . . The Tathāgata's understanding goes beyond verbal expression . . ."
>
> (T.12.338, p. 92.c.5–19)

Mañjuśrī is silenced, but the debate over the use of words is continued when Pure Gift confronts Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva.[41] On the way to the city of

Śrāvastī, Avalokiteśvara had resolved to bring about freedom from bondage for all who live there. Pure Gift asks him if his compassionate action involves attachment or not. If it does, it is no different from the actions of ordinary people. If it does not, then efficacious action is impossible because without attachment there is no action at all. Avalokiteśvara does not reply because what Pure Gift has asked about is (he admits) inexpressible. But she says that it *is* possible to make an explanation using words, provided there is no attachment to the words for when there is no attachment to them, words are not themselves a hindrance.[42] This freedom from hindrances is the *dharmadhātu*,[43] since those who know the Dharma are free from attachment.

To the Bodhisattva Nondeluded Views, Pure Gift points out that the Tathāgata cannot be seen at all, for his truth is formless[44] and whoever sees his material body does not see the Buddha. She reminds the Bodhisattva Abandoning Evil Destinies that he cannot lessen people's misdeeds or the sufferings they undergo because of them by the power of his resolve, because all the phenomena of this world, the dharmas, are fundamentally the same and cannot be diverted or changed by anyone. Against Bodhisattva Hindrances Removed, she argues that one cannot destroy others' ignorance and create merit for them by the power of one's own concentration, even by concentration on friendliness, for all the Buddhas always practice the concentration on friendliness and there are still beings whose understanding is obstructed. All the Bodhisattvas are silenced.

In debate with the Bodhisattvas Pure Gift has challenged the Bodhisattvas' imperfect understanding of the meaning of their own vows to lead all beings to liberation. It cannot be done, she says, by attempting to divert the sufferings of others, it can be done by skillful teaching. To teach, it is essential that one understand how to use words correctly. She sets out next, therefore, to make correct use of words in conversation with the Buddha himself. She asks him a question in 18 parts which he answers in 18 tetrads, prose and verse.[45] She asks how to follow the Bodhisattva career and especially how to realize the more extraordinary attainments of the Bodhisattva who has progressed close to Buddhahood itself. She asks: (1) how to subdue the Māras, (2) how to shake the Buddha-lands, (3) how to illumine all Buddha-lands with rays from the body, (4) how to obtain the magical formulas (*tsung ch'ih, dhāraṇi*), (5) the concentrations (*san-mei, samādhi*), (6) the bases of the supernormal powers (*shen-tsu, ṛddhipāda*), (7) a noble appearance which will delight those who see it, (8) transformation-rebirth (*hua-sheng*), (9) great wealth, (10) great understanding; (11) how one can be aware of previous existences, (12) and be together with all the Buddhas; (13) how one obtains the 32 primary marks (of the Great Man, *mahāpuruṣa*), (14) and the 80 secondary marks; (15) how one can attain skill in discourse, (16) a Buddha-land, (17) a following which is always in harmony and will not be dispersed, and (18) rebirth in the Buddha-land one has mentally resolved upon.

The Buddha's reply to Pure Gift exhorts her to perfect herself in commitment

to others, generosity, deep understanding of Dharma together with the responsibility to teach it; and to venerate her teachers, and make offerings to the Buddhas, their stūpas and their images. Furthermore, the Bodhisattva should actually make Buddha-images (in order to attain transformation-rebirth in a Buddha-land); should practice the *samādhi* of recalling all the Buddhas (in order to be together with all the Buddhas); and attain tolerance of the profound Dharma (so that one can cause all the Buddha-lands to shake).

Pure Gift acknowledges the Buddha's instruction and resolves not to fail to carry it out. But Mahāmaudgalyāyana comes forth and accuses her of treating the Bodhisattva-career lightly, and not understanding it, for one cannot attain perfect enlightenment with a woman's body.[46] Thereupon Pure Gift performs an act of truth:

> "If my words are true and not false, and I shall in a future existence attain ... the perfect enlightenment of the Buddhas (*samyaksaṃbodhi*) ... may all the great world systems quake six times ... heavenly flowers rain down and musical instruments sound of themselves; and may my female form change into that of a boy of 8—I make this resolve."
>
> (T. 12.338, p. 96.a.19–25)

All happens as she says, and Mahāmaudgalyāyana praises the Bodhisattva-way which makes it possible for a young girl to accomplish such a transformation.

The Buddha smiles and illumines all the world systems, and announces that, like Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva, Pure Gift first aspired to perfect Buddhahood aeons ago, and she will attain it.

After all this, Mahāmaudgalyāyana again challenges Pure Gift: since you have been so long established in understanding, why hadn't you changed your female body before this? And she answers: "The World-Honored One has praised you as best in the attainment of the bases of supernormal powers. Why haven't you changed your male body?"[47] Mahāmaudgalyāyana is again speechless, but Pure Gift continues: "Neither with a female body nor with a male body is true enlightenment attained ... for there is no achieving perfect enlightenment in any way" (T.12.338, p. 96.c.25–27).

The sūtra ends with Mañjuśrī joining the Buddha in praise of Pure Gift. The Buddha announces she has for aeons practiced the concentration on emptiness, has developed the tolerance of the notion that dharmas do not arise, learned about the Bodhisattva way and by making offerings to countless Buddhas has mastered the concentration which enables her to teach others. The Buddha then finishes the prophecy of Pure Gift's Buddhahood, prophesies that of the 500 Brāhmaṇas as well, and the sūtra ends.

### *(3) Pure Faith's Question (translated by Bodhiruci)*

In the Jeta grove at Śrāvastī, the Buddha is staying with a large gathering of monks, Bodhisattvas, gods and ordinary people. King Prasenajit's young daughter, Pure Faith, who had planted wholesome roots and trained in the Mahāyāna, goes with 500 women companions to the Buddha and questions him about the practices of a Bodhisattva. The Buddha's answer is in twelve parts, prose and verse; eight practices are taught in each of the twelve parts (total of 96).[48] She asks: (1) how the Bodhisattva shall be firm, brave and tireless in life (*sheng-szu, saṃsāra*), (2) how to abide in the certainty of the sameness of all beings, dharmas, all knowledge, actions, etc., (3) how the Bodhisattva shall avoid love and hatred, (4) how avoid being wearied by life (*sheng-szu, saṃsāra*), (5) how make thought as impartial as earth, water, fire, space, etc., (6) how generate enlightenment, (7) acquire the magical formulas (*t'o-lo-ni, dhāraṇī*) and unimpeded eloquence (8) how to be reborn by transformation (*hua-sheng*) in a lotus in the presence of all the Buddhas, (9) how to acquire merits from the ascetic practices (*t'out'o, dhuta*), (10) how subjugate the Māras; (11) how the Bodhisattva can be near to enlightenment, (12) and realize the way of the nectar of deathlessness (*kan-lu, amṛta = nirvāṇa*).

The Buddha's reply amounts to a comprehensive summary of the Bodhisattva's practices and the perfection of understanding: the Bodhisattva's primary task is to help others free themselves and attain enlightenment; to do this, the Bodhisattva must be constantly perfecting his or her own attitude and conduct toward others. Part of the training is following the Noble Eight-fold Path, part is learning the Dharma, for the sake of which one must revere one's teachers; and in order to mature one's practice and understanding one must be ready to accept the discipline of solitary dwelling as an ascetic. What the Bodhisattva must understand is the sameness of all beings, all dharmas, all ways of comprehending. When one then knows phenomenal existence for what it is, one can accept it without fear and exert oneself fully for the sake of all beings, actualizing the six perfections. When one is living like this, with mind expanded and made pliant by meditative practices (*samādhi* and *anusmṛti*), and when the tolerance of the notion that dharmas do not arise has been attained, one is solidly on the "deathless path" and perfect enlightenment is not far away.

Pleased with this long exposition, Pure Faith asks yet another question: what must a woman do to change her female body? In answer, the Buddha enumerates 16 things (two groups of eight each), a woman must do to bring this about: avoid envy, stinginess, flattery, anger, be truthful, slander no one, abandon desire, and all wrong views; revere Buddha and Dharma, make offerings to monks and to Brāhmaṇas, give up attachment to home and family, accept the precepts, have no evil thoughts, become indifferent to her female body, abide in the thought of enlightenment and the dharmas of the Great Man, regard worldly life as like an illusion, like a dream. This second reply of the Buddha to Pure Faith is much simpler, much more prosaic than the beautiful discourse on the

Bodhisattva-way which he had delivered just before. Both his replies are very specific to the questions asked: the first question was, what is the Bodhisattva-way, and the reply was a complete description of it, appropriate for Pure Faith or any other aspirant to *bodhi*. Pure Faith's second question shows where *she* is, on the path; she has obviously not attained understanding of the sameness of all dharmas, for she now distinguishes between female and male. It is she who wants to change her body, which is called impure. No one challenges her to do so. A few moments before, the Buddha had said that in order to subdue the Māras, the Bodhisattva must stop discriminating between dharmas. Pure Faith obviously has not yet subdued the Māras.

Pure Faith and her 500 companions scatter garlands and jewelry over the Buddha, which are magically transformed in space into golden-towered palaces. All resolve to follow the Bodhisattva-path and to abandon the corruptions of the female body. The Buddha smiles and predicts that at the end of their present lives, Pure Faith and her 500 companions will abandon their female bodies and be reborn in the Tuṣita Heaven to serve and make offerings to Maitreya (who is to be the next Buddha in this world-system) and all the Tathāgatas of the present era. Then, after countless aeons, Pure Faith will become a Buddha with her own Buddha-land, and the 500 women will be the leaders of her retinue. The sūtra ends with this promise: if a woman hears this sūtra; accepts it and recites it, when her female body dies, she will never again be reborn a woman and will quickly attain to perfect enlightenment.[49]

### *(4) Gaṅgottara-sūtra (translated by Bodhiruci)*

While the Buddha is staying in the Jeta grove at Śrāvastī, a woman of that city, Gaṅgottara the lay disciple (*yu-p'o-i, upāsikā*) comes to greet him, and the Buddha engages her in a dialogue. He asks:

> "Where do you come from?" She replies: "World Honored One, if one asks a magically created being,[50] 'where do you come from?' how should the question be answered?" The Buddha: "A magically created being neither goes nor comes, is neither born nor destroyed, so how can it be said that it comes from somewhere?" Gaṅgottara: "Is it not true that all dharmas are like magical creations? . . . Then how can you ask me 'where do you come from?'" The Buddha: ". . . Are you like a magically created being?" Gaṅgottara: ". . . I see no difference between myself and a magically created being. (Therefore) how could it be said that I shall go to any of the evil destinies or reach *nirvaṇa*?"
>
> (T. 11. 310(31), p. 549.b.23–c.4)

The Buddha then asserts that *nirvāṇa is* "non-arising" (*wu-sheng*). And he acknowledges that what he had asked about has no objective support;[51] yet he raised the question, because there are in the assembly sons and daughters of

good family who are ready to be matured by it. This can occur, even though, as the Tathāgata knows, no dharmas and no designations at all can be apprehended. Gaṅgottara then asks, if nothing whatever can be apprehended or gotten at, how can wholesome roots be accumulated for the sake of enlightenment; and the Buddha replies that when wholesome roots are being accumulated there is "no thought" of them (*wu-hsin*), no attempt to know or grasp anything by thinking. For all dharmas are like empty space which knows no impediments. Thus, he goes on, although I use words to refer to "self," "form," "*saṃsāra*" (*sheng-szu*), "*nirvāṇa*" (nieh-*p'an*), etc., no characteristics of any such entities can ever be appréhended. The one who sees that dharmas cannot be apprehended is the one who truly lives the pure life (*fan-hsing, brahmacaryā*). This is the dharma which stops the cycle of rebirth. What is this dharma? asks Gaṅgottara. The Buddha replies: "That which stops the cycle of rebirth is what is called the inconceivable element which is the reality-limit.[52] This dharma cannot be damaged or destroyed. Therefore it is called the dharma which stops the cycle of rebirth." (T. 11.310(31), p. 550.a. 11–14)

Then the Buddha smiles, illumines countless universes and announces that the Dharma he has just preached has been preached in the past by a thousand Tathāgatas to a thousand assemblies, and always these assemblies have been led by an *upāsikā* Gaṅgottara.

Hearing this, Gaṅgottara and the whole assembly go forth from home life to become monks or nuns in order to progress toward *nirvāṇa*. Then the gods who had listened to this preaching magically create all sorts of rare heavenly flowers and shower them upon the Buddha observing: "This *upāsikā* is truly extraordinary, for she is able to converse fearlessly with the Tathāgata. In the past she must have associated with countless Buddhas, made offerings to them and thus planted all sorts of wholesome roots." (T.11.310(31), p. 550.b.1–3).

Then all are filled with great joy, accept the teaching with conviction and reverently practice it.

Although "Bodhisattvas" are mentioned only once in the sūtra of Gaṅgottarā the *upāsika*, and future *nirvāṇa*, not future Buddhahood, is promised for this wise woman, the doctrine taught is that found in other Mahāyāna scriptures, such as the *Prajñāpāramitāsūtras*. It is worth noticing that the point of departure for the teaching in this text is the proposition of a magically created being, to which all beings and all phenomena are likened since all are equally impossible to apprehend as really existing entities with definable characteristics. Here, then, as in the *Sumati-*, *Pure Gift- and Pure Faith-sūtras* it is established that dharmas cannot be discriminated, for at the ultimate level there is nothing which differentiates them. The use of words is not on that account prohibited, however, even though words too are not ultimately true; verbal teaching is necessary, for it can cause unenlightened beings to progress toward enlightenment. It is also worth noticing that, as the gods say at the end of the sūtra, the woman Gaṅgottara and the Buddha converse at the same high level of understanding, as do, for example, Subhuti and the Buddha in the *Aṣṭasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra*.

Gaṅgottara's very deep understanding of the Dharma, which may not be equal to that of the perfected Buddha but is beyond that of most other beings, is also reminiscent of Vimalakīrti's and that of the women Sumati and Pure Gift who can vanquish even the wisest of Bodhisattvas in debate.

## Changing the female body: the event and its meaning

Let us now recount again briefly from the *Sumati*- and *Pure Gift Sūtras* the action of the event, "changing the female body," so that it may be compared with the relevant sections of the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa* and *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-sūtra*.

There are two separate parts to the sequence of events surrounding the change of sex in the *Sumati*- and *Pure Gift Sūtras*. In the *Sumati*, we are dealing with a child of 8, daughter of a householder, who has already accumulated merit in the past by making offerings to the Buddhas. Her capacity to follow the Bodhisattva's vocation and her understanding of that vocation are challenged. *Part I* of the sequence of events: (1) Mahāmaudgalyāyana tries to invalidate her resolve to carry out the Bodhisattva practices by saying, you are only a small girl and can't do it. (2) She performs an act of truth: if I am able to carry out the Bodhisattva practices, let the worlds shake, heavenly flowers rain down and music sound; (3) and then a second act of truth: if I shall soon become a perfect Buddha let everyone here turn the color of gold. (4) All this happens, and Mahāmaudgalyāyana acknowledges the superiority of the Bodhisattva-way. *Part II*: (1) Sumati debates with Mañjuśrī and demonstrates her understanding of the emptiness of all dharmas and the consequent impossibility of discriminating any of them. (2) The Buddha acknowledges that long ago she had aspired to attain perfect enlightenment (*bodhicittotpāda*) and just now has attained the tolerance of the notion that dharmas do not arise (*anutpattikadharmakṣānti*). (3) At this point, Mañjuśrī challenges her, saying: "Why haven't you changed your female body?" and (4) the answer is, "Femaleness cannot be apprehended, because dharmas are neither male nor female." Mañjuśrī has apparently just discriminated among dharmas. Sumati, who has attained *anutpattikadharmakṣānti*, does not discriminate among dharmas. (5) But, in order to eliminate any possible doubts Mañjuśrī might have about her understanding and her capacities, she performs a third act of truth: if it is true that I shall attain Buddhahood, may I now change into a man. She becomes a young male novice in the Buddhist clerical order. (6) She then makes a resolve (*praṇidhāna*) concerning her future Buddha-land, including the proviso that there will be nothing in it having to do with women, and the resolve functions also as an act of truth: if my Buddha-land shall be so, may my body be like that of a 30-year-old monk. (7) This too happens, and finally the Buddha predicts that Sumati will soon become a fully enlightened Buddha.

The *Pure Gift Sūtra* has a 12- (or 8-) year-old princess as the central figure, daughter of King Prasenajit, who had also accumulated great merit in past exis-

tences. In the scripture, the princess demonstrates, at great length, her deep understanding of Dharma in debate with 16 disciples and Bodhisattvas. Then comes the sequence of events surrounding her change of body. *Part I*: (1) as in the *Sumati-sūtra*, Mahāmaudgalyāyana accuses the princess of not understanding the Bodhisattva-way, for one cannot attain perfect enlightenment with a woman's body. (2) She performs an act of truth: if I shall truly become a Buddha in the future, let the worlds shake, heavenly flowers rain down, music sound and let my female body change into an 8- (or 16-) year-old boy's. (3) This happens, and Mahāmaudgalyāyana praises the Bodhisattva-way. *Part II*: (1) the Buddha announces that Pure Gift, like Mañjuśrī, aspired to attain perfect Buddhahood long before and both Bodhisattvas will attain it. (2) Not yet finished, Mahāmaudgalyāyana again challenges Pure Gift, saying in effect, since you have been so wise for so long, why hadn't you changed your female body before this? (3) She retorts, if you are really first in the practice of supernormal powers, why haven't you changed your male body?; and he is speechless. (4) She then affirms that perfect enlightenment cannot be attained by a woman or by a man, for it is completely impossible to grasp it. (5) Mañjuśrī then joins the Buddha in praising Pure Gift; the Buddha announces she has already mastered the concentration on emptiness, attained the tolerance of the notion that dharmas do not arise and the ability to teach others, and will soon attain Buddhahood.

The confrontation between Śāriputra and the goddess in the *Vimalakīrtinirdesá* has much in common with the events recounted from the *Sumati-* and *Pure Gift-sūtras*. In Chapter 7 of the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa*, "Examining Sentient Beings,"[53] a goddess suddenly manifests in visible form after listening to Vimalakīrti tell Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva that all beings should be regarded as like creatures created by a magician or like a mirage, etc. This is the point of departure for the confrontation between the goddess and Śāriputra. Pleased with what she has heard, the goddess causes heavenly flowers to be scattered over everyone in the assembly gathered at Vimalakīrti's house. The flowers roll off the bodies of the Bodhisattvas present, but stick to those of the disciples, who cannot get rid of them even by using their supernormal powers. The goddess asks Śāriputra, wisest of the disciples, why he wants to be rid of the flowers. He replies that they are not proper for disciples (monks are prohibited by monastic regulation from adorning themselves with flowers). The goddess accuses Śāriputra of falsely distinguishing "proper" from "improper"; it is because he does this that the flowers appear to stick to his body while not troubling the Bodhisattvas at all, for the Bodhisattvas have freed themselves from the habit of discriminating among things. Śāriputra is silenced.

All of this is preliminary to the sex change which climaxes the chapter. The preliminary section is similar in content to the discussions in the *Sumati-* and *Pure Gift-sūtras*, which precede and provoke the sex changes in those texts. Śāriputra is guilty of imperfectly understanding reality; he assumes that things can really be distinguished from one another. When he then discriminates female from male, taking them for two real and distinct phenomena, he is

affirming his disciple's view of reality. The change of sex proceeds from that point: (1) He asks the goddess why she does not change her female body. (2) She says she has sought femaleness for the 12 years she has lived in Vimalakīrti's house but has not found it, for what one calls a woman is something created by magic—and can one ask something created by magic to change its femaleness? (3) Thereupon she uses her supernormal powers to exchange forms with Śāriputra, so that Śāriputra appears in the form of the goddess and she appears in his. She then asks him: (4) Why don't *you* change *your* female form?, to which he replies that he doesn't even know how he acquired this female body. (5) The goddess then makes her point: You, Śāriputra, like all women, appear in the form of a woman, yet you and the others are not really "women" at all, for as the Buddha says, no dharmas are either female or male. (6) She causes the two of them to regain their original forms, and Śāriputra concedes her point, but goes on to ask (7) where she will be reborn next. She says she will be reborn where the Buddha's transformations (*hua, nirmāṇa*) are reborn.—But these are *not* reborn (says Śāriputra). And so it is with all beings, says the goddesss: they are not born. (8) Śāriputra asks when the goddess will attain perfect enlightenment; the goddess replies that no one can ever attain perfect enlightenment, for enlightenment has nothing to rest upon, it cannot be grasped. (9) Vimalakīrti then explains to Śāriputra that the goddess has already served countless Buddhas in the past, has attained the super-knowledges,[54] fulfilled her resolves, attained the tolerance of the notion that dharmas do not arise and will never turn back from the Bodhisattva path. Because of her resolve (*praṇidhāna*) she can appear wherever she wishes in order to teach and develop living beings.

It is in the *Lotus sūtra* (*Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*) that the *locus classicus* for the change of sex is found. This is the episode of the daughter of the Dragon-king Sāgara, which occurs at the end of the 11th chapter (in the Sanskrit version) or the 12th chapter (in Kumārajīva's and Dharmarakṣa's Chinese translations).[55] The Buddha has just recounted the tale of a previous existence of himself and his cousin and rival, Devadatta. Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva is present, having just returned from a sojourn in the Dragon kingdom and he is asked by Prajñākūṭa Bodhisattva how many beings he had converted there and whether any of them by understanding and practicing the *Lotus*' teaching would be able to attain Buddhahood. Mañjuśrī replies, there was one, the 8-year-old daughter of the Dragon-king Sāgara, who is superior in knowledge and understanding, has made wide-reaching resolves and practices faultlessly.[56] Prajñākūṭa observes that the Bodhisattva way is very difficult, it takes much time to attain perfect enlightenment and he doubts that such a young girl could do it. Then, (1) the Dragon-princess suddenly appears, praises the Buddha whose body bears the 32 characteristics of the Great Man and vows to attain Buddhahood. (2) Śāriputra speaks up, charging that she cannot become a Buddha, despite what she has accomplished, because a woman's body is prohibited from five ranks of existence:[57] a woman cannot be a Śakra-god, Brahmā-god, Māra-god, universal

monarch or a Buddha. (3) Undismayed, the Dragon-princess presents the Buddha with a precious gem which he accepts at once, and she asks Śāriputra to confirm that he took it quickly, not slowly. (4) She then says, "Now I shall seize the unexcelled perfect way and achieve supreme enlightenment even more quickly than that."[58] (5) She immediately changes into a male Bodhisattva; and then at once becomes a Buddha who is endowed with the 32 primary and 80 secondary characteristics. (6) Everyone in the assembly is astonished, many gain immediate advancement on the Way, some aspire to attain future Buddhahood, and the worlds quake. (7) Śāriputra and Prajñākūṭa Bodhisattva are silent.

The passage on changing the body in the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* is less dramatic and much less elaborate than the passages in the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa* and the *Sumati*- and *Pure Gift-sūtras*. But the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* presents the basic argument clearly and boldly: the old notion that a woman's body disqualifies her from Buddhahood is wrong, for here is a Buddha-to-be (the Dragon-princess) who was born female and is moreover still a child, only 8 years old. Bodhisattva-hood is not inconsistent with having a female body; in fact, one can be reborn as a woman, as the Dragon-princess was, after having progressed very far on the path to Buddhahood—she cannot, after all, have accomplished so much in the few brief years of her present life. (This point is explicit in Kumārajīva's text, but is only implied by Dharmaraksa's and T.9.265.) The *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*'s argument is directed against the notion that some *bodies* (male) are fit for the highest destinies, and other *bodies* (female) are not. It is the body of the Great Man with its 32 major and 80 minor characteristics which is the physical model to which women cannot conform, according to some Buddhists. The *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* identifies those Buddhists as disciples (*śrāvakas*) or "Hīnayānists," by putting the challenge of the female body into the mouth of Śāriputra, wisest of the disciples. This bias against femaleness was widely enough held to provoke the Mahāyānist authors of the *Lotus* to refute it squarely. It is the understanding of the disciples which is at fault; those who understand the *Lotus*' teaching—like Mañjuśrī—see no problem in the sex or the age of the girl-Bodhisattva.

So far as I know, no other sūtras containing a change of the female body follow the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*'s model exactly. The *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* seems to have closed this particular phase of the argument, which was directed against a particular doctrine of particular Buddhists. When the authors of other sūtras took up the theme of "changing the female body," they opened new areas of debate.

In the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa, Sumati*- and *Pure Gift-sūtras*, there is again a specific challenge to the combination of possession of deep understanding with possession of a female body; and in the *Sumati*- and *Pure Gift-sūtras*, at least, there are still clear references to the ideal body of the Great Man. But the intention of these three sūtras is to establish *why* physical differences between male and female are irrelevant to the attainment of enlightenment. The differences are, from the point of view of perfected understanding, not real, for there is no

apprehending "real" differences between any phenomena at the level of ultimate truth. The distinction of male and female is essentially a matter of incomplete understanding. The *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa* and the two *Mahāratnakūṭa sūtras* teach the doctrines of the emptiness (*śūnyatā*) and the sameness (*samatā*) of all the dharmas; they are doctrinally related to the *Prajñāpāramitā-sūtras*. In the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, as is well known, the doctrine of emptiness is not a major teaching, and for this reason, it seems to me, the handling of the sex change is less satisfactory there than in the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa* and the other sūtras. Change of sex does seem to be necessary, according to the *Lotus*, if a woman is to take the final step to Buddhahood. In the other texts, change of body is like a magician's transformations, and so is *everything* which ordinary persons take to be real in this world. Femaleness, and the transformation into a male, are not ultimately real, but both can be used by the Bodhisattva to reach and instruct benighted sentient beings. In these texts, magic is a metaphor for the enlightened way of dealing with the utter fluidity of reality. In Kumārajīva's *Lotus*, and in the Sanskrit version, there is some mention of magic and supernormal powers (see note 58). It is quite possible that these touches were added later under the influence of texts like the *Vimalakīrti* and the *Mahāratnakūṭa* sūtras where magic is an essential component of the "changing the female body" scenario.

The *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* offers one literary model for dealing with the theme of changing the female body, and the *Vimalakīrti, Sumati-* and *Pure Gift-sūtras* offer another. But these latter three texts differ from one another in several details. Magic, playfully performed, is a prominent motif in the entire *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa*—Vimalakīrti himself is a master magician, and the goddess uses magic freely. But it is Śāriputra she confronts, and Śāriputra is not comfortable with magic. The issue in the *Vimalakīrti* is, above all, the contest between true understanding and imperfect understanding, and magic is an appropriate metaphor for the one and a suitable corrective for the other. The *Pure Gift-* and *Sumati-sūtras*, by presenting Mahāmaudgalyāyana as challenger, seem to stress magic as technique for instruction, for Mahāmaudgalyāyana is master of supernormal powers in Buddhist tradition. Here he meets his match, and the old conjuror is out-conjured by mere girls.

In the *Sumati-sūtra* Mahāmaudgalyāyana does make the initial challenge to Sumati, but it is Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva who questions her femaleness. Mañjuśrī is a prominent figure in the other texts as well, but his role is always that of one who tests or testifies to the woman's understanding. The implication is that the woman's understanding is at least equal to his own; this is especially clear in the *Pure Gift-sūtra*, where the Buddha finally reveals that Pure Gift and Mañjuśrī have had parallel histories and are equally certain to reach the highest goal, Buddhahood. Mañjuśrī, Bodhisattva of highest wisdom, is linked to these wise women; they are his equals. Why then does he question Sumati's femaleness after he has tested her understanding? He seems to come out the loser when he does, for Sumati points out that *he* is guilty of making false distinctions, but to resolve *his doubts* she will transform herself. It does seem that, here, the

woman's superiority over the wisest of male Bodhisattvas is asserted. Pure Gift silences Mañjuśrī in debate; but the Buddha insists on the essential equality of the two Bodhisattvas. The *Sumati-sūtra* is provocative at this point; but the sequence of events reads somewhat oddly because Mañjuśrī is made to usurp what should be Mahāmaudgalyāyana's rôle, and thereby the confrontation between Mahāyāna and "Hīnayāna" is obscured.

There is a dramatic coherence in the goddess chapter of the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa*, and in the *Pure Gift Sūtra*, which is lacking in the *Sumati-sūtra*. In the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa*, there is a single sequence of events; everything proceeds consistently to a single climax, the goddess' playful exchange of bodies with Śāriputra. The sequence of events in both the *Sumati-* and *Pure Gift-sūtras* is in two parts: the first part looks like a standard scenario for the change of sex, which is brought about by the performance of an act of truth and accompanied by a variety of supernatural occurrences. A scenario like this, with Mahāmaudgalyāyana, master of the *ṛddhi*, as challenger, could easily have been incorporated into a number of sūtras, with variations in detail. The principal variation in these two sūtras is that Mahāmaudgalyāyana's challenge provokes Pure Gift to change her female body, but not Sumati. The second part of the episode in the two sūtras resembles that in the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa* even more closely, and has as its point the irrefutable demonstration of the impossibility of making distinctions between phenomena, including the phenomena "male" and "female."

The sequence of events is actually more complicated in the *Sumati-sūtra* than in the *Pure Gift Sūtra*. Sumati's change involves two challengers, three acts of truth and consequent wondrous occurrences, one formal resolve (*praṇidhāna*), a change of body in two stages; and all of this arranged as two separate sequences of events; each with its own dénouement. Pure Gift's experiences are more coherently developed, and the second part of the sequence is only the explanation of what the change of sex has already demonstrated. The *Pure Gift Sūtra*'s scenario looks very much like a formula which may have been worked out, under the inspiration perhaps of the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa*, so that it could be adapted to use in other sūtras where the "changing the female body" theme was to play a role. The *Sumati-sūtra*'s could easily be a variation on this formula.

In *Pure Faith's Question*, the matter of changing the female body is brought up, but because of the level of understanding at which Pure Faith and her companions find themselves, a sudden, magical change of the body is not possible for them. If they continue to discipline themselves and to develop their understanding, the Buddha promises that they will be able to abandon femaleness forever at the end of their present lives and will only be reborn thereafter as males. The argument of the sūtra itself is, from the outset, that all beings, all dharmas, all conceptions are fundamentally lacking a fixed reality, for all are equally empty of a unique essence or self-hood. Although this sūtra urges the Bodhisattva to concrete action, such as making Buddha-images and venerating stūpas, the authors insist that all actions and all phenomena must finally be

recognized to be like an illusion, for no thing comes into being or is destroyed, all dharmas are forever still. It is Pure Faith who retains the habit of discriminating between right action and wrong, female and male. Thus she herself is not ready for a magical transformation of her body. The only magical transformation which occurs in the sūtra is that of the garlands Pure Faith and the others offer to the Buddha. Transformation of the person is only possible for those with enlightened understanding, for it is all a matter of how one looks at reality.

It is the intention of the *Gaṇgottara-sūtra* to establish that everything one believes to be "real" is like a magical creation. Above all, one's own person must be so regarded—and thus the question of transforming a body which is already recognized to be "like a magically created being" never arises. The magic in this sūtra is reserved for the ending, when the gods cause magically created flowers to rain down from the sky while they praise the wise "woman," Gaṅgottara. This sūtra is not a dramatic narrative with a didactic purpose, as the others are. It is a pure exposition of doctrine, in traditional Buddhist dialogue form, and in this respect resembles several of the *Prajñāpāramitā* texts, such as the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā, Vajracchedikā, Hṛdayā*, etc. In it the understanding of reality which the other sūtras—*Vimalakīrti, Sumati, Pure Gift, Pure Faith* and even the *Lotus*—reveal dramatically, is presented directly. The dramatic event of changing the female body is irrelevant there.

The *Śrīmālāsiṃhanādasūtra*[59] is another text which celebrates the wisdom of a woman without raising the question of a change of sex. Like Gaṅgottara, Queen Śrīmālā converses with the Buddha at an exalted level of understanding, especially in the latter half of the scriptures, when she preaches "the embrace of the Illustrious Doctrine that was held by all the Buddhas": there she speaks from the standpoint of complete Buddhahood, although this is because she is inspired to do so by the Buddha's power.[60] The queen's understanding, guided by the Buddha, is not faulty. But the sūtra does contain some motifs connected in the *Pure Gift*- and *Sumati-sūtras* with changing the female body. At the beginning of the text, Queen Śrīmāla has never seen the Buddha, but hearing of him and hearing that he has come for the world's sake, wishes that he will show himself to her out of compassion. He appears in space, she sees his inconceivable body, praises him, and asks that she may always see him. This he promises her, because she has accumulated great merit in the past by praising the Buddha's qualities; so, wherever she is born, she will see and praise him and make offerings to innumerable Buddhas.[61] Then, in the future, she will attain Buddhahood herself. The queen thereupon makes ten great vows (*praṇidhāna*) which are, in sum, to observe morality, revere teachers, cultivate right attitude and conduct toward others, teach and help others and embrace the Dharma.[62] Then she goes on:

> ". . . some sentient beings with meager roots of virtue might think, 'Oh, those ten great vows are difficult to uphold,' and would have doubt or hesitation toward me. Lord, by so thinking they would incur for a long time much harm, suffering and disaster. Lord, for the sake of helping

> precisely such persons, I wish to perform in the presence of the Lord this 'Blessing of Truth': Lord, just as surely as I have taken exactly these ten great vows, and if they are just as stated by me, then, Lord, by dint of this, my word of truth, may a shower of heavenly flowers descend upon the group and may divine sounds be heard sounded!"
>
> (Wayman, pp. 66–67)

All happens according to her words. Those in the assembly are freed from their doubts and resolve to remain always with Queen Śrīmālā. The Queen herself then goes on to make her three great resolves, which comprise all the Bodhisattva aspirations: to comprehend the true Dharma, to teach it to all beings and to uphold it even at the cost of body, life and possessions.

This episode is very nearly the same scenario found in the *Pure Gift-* and *Sumati-sūtras* which culminates however in those texts with the change of the female body. In the *Śrīmālāsiṃhanāda-sūtra* no one challenges the queen's femaleness, yet she performs her act of truth in order to remove the doubts of any of her hearers who might think her incapable of carrying out her vows. But there is no equivocation in the *Śrīmālā's* attitude toward women. Although the text repeats patterns found in older texts on women, Queen Śrīmālā is frankly accepted as a true teacher of the Dharma. Her understanding is never tested in debate. She is simply presented as a woman wise through the Buddha's guidance and inspiration. A change of sex is, in the context of her sūtra, as irrelevant for her as for Gaṅgottara.

It is not possible to generalize about the historical development of Mahāyāna Buddhist views on women, using only the information provided by the texts discussed in this essay. But in this group of texts itself, an evolution of thought and an exploration of various ways of looking at women's capacities does seem evident. The *Vimalakīrtinir*-deśa, *Pure Gift* and *Sumati-sūtras* were translated into Chinese during the 3rd century A.D., and certainly existed some time before that in their original languages, perhaps as early as the 2nd century A.D. The *Lotus* is also at least that old. The *Śrīmālā* was first translated into Chinese in the 5th century A.D., by Dharmakṣema (translation no longer extant), and then in the same century by Guṇabhadra. It is probably not as ancient as the four texts just mentioned. Wayman suggests that the text was composed in India in the 3rd century A.D.[63] The *Gaṅgottara-* and *Pure Faith-sūtras* were first translated into Chinese in the early 8th century by Bodhiruci, which suggests that they were composed more recently than any of the other texts discussed in this essay. The *Gaṅgottara* seems to represent the logical development of the tendencies found in the *Śrīmālā*. *Pure Faith's Question* is doctrinally consistent with the other Mahāyāna sūtras, as indicated above. Perhaps its unusual representation of a woman who is *not yet* wise can be assigned to a period when the issue of distinction-making between male and female was no longer critical, and an audience could agree that a woman could not only be wiser than others, but that she could also be as benighted as any man.

## Magic in Buddhism

Queen Śrīmālā's sūtra also touches on the matter of magical creations, especially on the phenomenon of "transformation"—death and rebirth. After discussing the *nirvāṇa* of Arhats and Pratyeka-Buddhas, the text adds that there are two kinds of death—the ordinary kind, and the "inconceivable transformation" which belongs to Arhats, Pratyeka-Buddhas and Bodhisattvas who have attained power. "Inconceivable transformation" belongs to bodies made of mind.[64] This means death and rebirth outside the normal processes, and, especially, free of the karma-process itself. Arhats, Pratyeka-Buddhas and power-wielding Bodhisattvas are those who have freed themselves from the influences (*asravas*) which bind one to the cycle of rebirth but have not yet totally freed themselves from ignorance (*avidyā*). Ignorance still conditions their death and rebirth, for as long as they do not fully comprehend all the dharmas they do not eliminate all faults and do not attain complete *nirvāṇa*. But "rebirth" occurs for them as a pure body made of mind.[65] Only the enlightenment of the Buddhas destroys all ignorance and *all* rebirth.

The *Sumati, Pure Gift-* and *Pure Faith-sūtras* all refer to transformation-rebirth on a lotus in the presence of the Buddhas, a notion which also became familiar in Pure Land Buddhism in China and Japan. In the *Mahāratnakūṭa* texts, the idea seems closely bound up with the ideas of magical creations of bodies and supernatural transformations which permeate these works.

That an adept can employ an advanced meditation technique to create a body made by his or her own mind is an opinion found in ancient Buddhist scriptures and elaborated in later treatises.[66] This is a pan-Buddhist notion. The power to transform one's own body into another form and the power to create bodies "made of mind" are two among the *ṛddhi*, or supernormal powers, explained in the *Visuddhimagga*.[67] According to the tradition of the pre-Mahāyāna schools, one must have mastered the practice of the *dhyānas* (contemplations) in order to make free use of the *ṛddhi*. Essentially, one must be in total control of one's mental processes, and one must have acquired the *ṛddhi-pāda*, the four concentrations which are the foundations of success in *ṛddhi* (see note 18).

In pre-Mahāyāna tradition, in order to attain *vikurvaṇā-ṛddhi*, which is the power to transform oneself, one is to resolve to appear in different forms—a snake, tiger, god, young boy, etc.—while disguising one's natural form. Having entered *dhyāna*, using one or another meditation-object,[68] one should arise from the meditation and contemplate oneself having the form of—for example—a boy. Having done this one should re-enter *dhyāna* and resolve, "May I be such and such a boy." With resolve, one becomes so. Similarly, in order to exercise *manomayā-ṛddhi*, the power of creating a body by mental powers, arising from *dhyāna* and contemplating the body one should resolve "Let the body be a hollow." The body becomes a hollow, one contemplates another body within one's own, resolves again and there is another body within oneself. One removes it, as a reed from its sheath, and the two are distinct but one is the

duplicate of the other.[69] Thus, one uses a progressive visualization exercise, in either case, and the end result is said to be the production of a new body, visible to others.[70]

Few can achieve *vikurvaṇā-ṛddhi*; it is a difficult attainment. But Buddhas, Pratyeka-Buddhas and chief disciples are said to attain it automatically when they become Arhats, that is, when they attain liberation from the cycle of rebirth.[71]

According to Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna tradition, *ṛddhi* is one of the five or six *abhijñā*,[72] the supernormal intellections or super-knowledges which are realized by those who have advanced very far in the spiritual life. And, according to the Mahāyānist *Ta-chih-tu-lun*, a Bodhisattva who attains *anutpattikadharmakṣānti* always obtains, as fruit of that *kṣānti*, the *abhijñā*.[73] The Bodhisattva cultivates *ṛddhi-abhijñā* in order to advance a great many beings toward liberation; without it, relatively few beings can be matured. For this purpose, a Bodhisattva can make for him- or herself the body of a *cakravartin*, a Śakra, a Buddha, or whatever is required to effect someone's liberation. Such transformations (*nirmita*) are true and not false, for no dharma has a fixed characteristic (*niyata-lakṣaṇa*)[75]

This résumé of early Buddhist notions of the working of the supernormal power of transformation, and the Mahāyāna explanation of the purposes for which it is used, show us the nexus of ideas within which the authors of the *Pure Gift Sūtra* and the rest were working. The Mahāyāna interpretation of magical transformations is, as the *Ta-chih-tu-lun* says, that a transformation-body is as true as any other form we see around us, because nothing is absolutely fixed and unchangeable—that is, because everything is empty, everything is fluid. The specific connection established between the attainment of *anutpattikadharmakṣānti* and the power to transform and to create bodies make it clear, I believe, why the transforming women of the sūtras are said to have attained this *kṣānti* just before the event. *Anutpattikadharmakṣānti* means the tolerance of the notion that no dharmas whatever are born, that none therefore has a fixed reality or anything to define, that all dharmas are as fluid or as deceptive as illusion (*māyā*) and are fundamentally impossible to apprehend as distinct entities.[76] For the one who has reached such an insight, the world is completely open, and "transformations" are possible.

*Buddhānusmṛti*, the calling to mind of the Buddha or Buddhas, is another of the important basic notions common to most of the sūtras on women discussed here. *Buddhānusmṛti* is a meditation wherein the totality of the physical, mental and moral attributes which constitute Buddhahood become the object of contemplation. In Mahāyāna Buddhism, it is pre-eminently a visualization meditation by means of which the presence of the Buddha or Buddhas is imaginatively evoked so that the meditator can contact and venerate them or be guided or taught by them. The meditator sees with the mind the image of the Buddha(s), specifically including the 32 characteristic marks of the Great Man.[77] This is what Pure Gift does, after she has heard of the Buddha's qualities and visible

marks. Pure Gift and Sumati are told to make images of the Buddhas in order to see them and be with them always; the sculptures or paintings are then, presumably, to serve as guides or supports to meditation.

Now, what are these images cultivated in the mind? According to the *Pratyutpannabuddhasaṃmukhāvasthitasamādhisūtra*, one of the earliest and most informative extant Mahāyāna scriptures on *buddhānusmṛti*, images of the Buddhas developed in *samādhi* can be seen and spoken to, but the meditator must finally realize that these images are nothing but mental constructs. The one who can concentrate on the Buddha without apprehending him, fixing upon him or discriminating him, obtains the *samādhi* of emptiness.[78] Such a Bodhisattva can contemplate the Buddha's body without entertaining a false discrimination connected with the body, or with the dharmas, and thus he or she does not apprehend body or dharmas. If one does not apprehend any dharmas, one does not imagine or falsely discriminate, and this is unobstructed knowledge.[79]

The *Mahāratnakūṭa* sūtras on women are all constructed against the background of the Mahāyāna doctrine of emptiness. All the discourses on bodies, on magical transformations, on visions of Buddhas and on conduct which will lead to liberation, are consistent with each other within that framework.

## The act of truth

An act of truth precipitates the climactic change of body in the *Sumati-* and *Pure Gift-sūtras*, and figures prominently in the *Śrīmālāsiṃhanādasūtra*. Since the act of truth plays such a critical role in the scenario of the change of body, and since it is intimately interwoven with the themes of magic and wonders and the Bodhisattva's resolve (*praṇidhāna*), it requires further examination.

The act of truth (*satyakriyā*)[80] is well-known in ancient Indian literature, Buddhist and non-Buddhist. Examples occur in the Buddhist *Jātakas*, in Mahāyāna sūtras such as the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā*, and a classic discussion of truth acts is found in the *Milindapañha*. They are also very familiar from such non-Buddhist texts as the *Mahābhārata*, the *Ramāyāna*, the *Brāhmaṇas* and the earlier Vedic literature.[81] Burlingame has defined the act of truth as "a formal declaration of fact, accompanied by a command or resolution or prayer that the purpose of the agent shall be accomplished." The basis of the truth act, according to W. Norman Brown, is the singleness of purpose with which one has fulfilled his or her duty: when one fulfills one's own duty, no matter what that duty is, "the individual achieves personal integrity and fits the cosmic purpose. Life then becomes a sacrificial act, a rite (*kriyā*), and as such, when perfectly executed, it can accomplish any wish, compelling even the gods."[82] *Satyakriyā* is speaking one's own truth, affirming that one has done one's duty. It is this affirmation which is the ritual act, not merely the performance of one's duty. By speaking, one lays claim, in effect, to participation in truth on a cosmic scale, which includes the natural operation of cosmic forces, such as that which makes the rain fall, the sun rise and set, and so on. To speak the truth, one must know

the truth. Knowing one's own truth opens the way to understanding ultimate truth. According to the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-* and *Muṇḍaka-Upaniṣads*, the one who knows all has power over all;[83] or, in a Buddhist context it might be more correct to say, the one who knows all, transcends all limitations.

In ancient India, a woman's duty was far more rigidly defined than a man's; it was limited to her sexual functions so that if a woman performed a truth act it would affirm the fulfillment of her duty as devoted wife, or as successful prostitute.[84] Perhaps the most striking evidence for the very different attitude toward women found in some Mahāyāna Buddhist texts is the fact that a woman is no longer identified merely by her sexual function; when she performs a truth act it is grounded on the fact of her true aspiration to the attainment of Buddhahood and on her unshakable commitment to the Bodhisattva career. Sumati, Pure Gift and Śrīmālā know their truth; and in fact, their truth is that they are rapidly coming to know ultimate truth. Like the Buddha himself, who is already all-knowing, the three truthsayers are in knowing harmony with reality and therefore can appear to transcend what the unknowing take to be unalterable natural laws.[85] Ultimate truth (*paramārthasatya*) in Mahāyāna Buddhism cannot be confined to any concept or any verbal definition. "Magic" and "wonders," "female" and "male" are some of the definitions the unknowing impose on aspects of their incomplete view of reality. One must do this so as to give some order to one's experience of life. But even a Bodhisattva or the Buddha himself uses words to communicate with and to help ordinary beings in the world—as the Buddha tells Gaṅgottara the laywoman. However, one who truly understands uses words without any attachment to them, and thus words are no obstacle to understanding or to compassionate action.[86]

*Satyakriyā* is compassionate action, in the eyes of Śrīmālā, and of Pure Gift and Sumati. It is performed in order to remove all doubts the hearers might have about the woman's capacity to follow the Bodhisattva path, for if one harbors doubts about what is actually true one would suffer pain and the disaster of remaining far from liberating truth (as the *Śrīmālāsiṃhanāda-sūtra* says). *Satyakriyā* is thus understood, in these *Mahāratnakūṭa-sūtras*, to be part of the Bodhisattva's effort to effect the liberation of all beings. That is what the Bodhisattva has resolved upon when uttering his or her original vow (*praṇidhāna*) to strive for Buddhahood so as to deliver others from suffering. The functions of *satyakriyā* and *praṇidhāna* begin to merge in the *Sumati-*, *Pure Gift-* and *Śrīmālā-sūtras*, until finally Sumati can make a *satyakriyā* out of her own *praṇidhāna* to have in future a Buddha-land which is free from deceit and suffering.

## Conclusion

"Changing the female body" is a narrative theme which was probably developed by Mahāyānist writers in order to confront traditional Buddhist views of the spiritual limitations of women. It challenges the earlier notion that women's

bodies are visible evidence that they have not reached a high level of spiritual maturity and cannot therefore be candidates for Buddhahood. In Mahāyāna texts such as the *Sumati-* and *Pure Gift-sūtras*, the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa* and the *Ta-chihtu tu lun*, this notion is critized and put in its proper place according to the perspective of the *śūnyavāda*. In these texts, the supposition that maleness and femaleness are ultimately real is negated by the realization of the universal emptiness and sameness of all dharmas.

In ordinary worldly life, however, people exist as male or female, obviously, and apprehend themselves as sexually differentiated: Pure Faith for example is aware of herself as female. In the sūtras examined for this essay, there is no attempt to demean or exalt anyone's ordinary existence in the world as man or woman. The world is a busy place, and people live in it as best they can, finding ways to deal with the richness they find there. But in the case of those who commit themselves to the spiritual life and thus cease to value ordinary life in the world as others do, the matter of sex distinctions must be looked at differently. The purpose of the five *Mahāratnakūṭasūtras*, the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa* and the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* is to assert that for those commited to the Bodhisattva career distinctions on the basis of sex no longer have any meaning. When one consciously sets out on the Bodhisattva path, one abandons identification with the traditional roles of either sex. The religious life, whether it is lived as a cleric or as a layperson, is a third alternative: it is a new birth into a new kind of creative living.

The act of committing oneself to this other way of living creatively in the world is ritualized, in Mahāyāna literature, as a formal resolve, the *praṇidhāna*, taken in the presence of a Buddha. In the *Sumati, Pure Gift, Śrīmālā* and *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtras* it is further ritualized as *satyakriyā*, act or rite of truth. In these texts, in fact, *praṇidhāna* and *satyakriyā* function so similarly that distinctions between them begin to blur. In the *Sumati, Pure Gift, Śrīmālá* and *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtras*, it is women who are committing themselves once again to the path to the ultimate attainment of Buddhahood. In earlier Buddhist literature, and in non-Buddhist Indian texts, a woman performing *satyakriyā* would affirm her commitment to a traditional woman's life in the world, in *saṃsāra*. Here, the truthsayers re-commit themselves to the attainment of perfect enlightenment instead. This abandonment of ordinary life as a woman in this world is symbolized by abandoning the female body and assuming the body of a male ascetic, of a young boy or of a Buddha. Despite the maleness of these new bodies, it seems fair to assume from the context that the transformation signifies the transcendence of ordinary worldly life and the sex distinctions that are part of it.

Magical displays enliven these sūtras on women. The metamorphosis from female to male is accomplished by magic and accompanied by it. Magic is, in the sūtras studied here, a metaphor for the enlightened way of dealing with the utter fluidity of reality. It is a metaphor for efficacious action in an empty world. Magical transformation of the body is possible only for those who have

awakened their understanding to a considerable degree: only those who have attained the tolerance of the notion that dharmas are not really produced or destroyed can transform themselves. They realize that it is an illusion that there are absolute differences between dharmas, for all dharmas are equally empty. Radical transformation of the person, by magic, and transcendence of the apparent laws of nature, are symbolic of the attainment of this conviction. The metamorphosing women of these sūtras all have this understanding and this consequent freedom of action.

But "changing the female body" is a narrative theme which recurs in many Mahāyāna sūtras. And it is a very dramatic event, used as the climax of a didactic narrative. As a literary devise, it crystallizes the various ideas referred to above, as well, no doubt, as others not mentioned. It is dramatically effective, and when its doctrinal implications have been explored it is intellectually acceptable too. It "works" in the narrative, and that is, I think, largely because the women's motivation for transforming themselves is compassion. By their remarkable actions they resolve a man's doubts and thus bring him closer to liberating understanding. What happens to the woman Bodhisattva herself is secondary to this. She actively demonstrates her total commitment to the Bodhisattva's way of doing everything possible to effect others' liberation.

Can a woman, or a man, then, be a Bodhisattva and follow the path to the attainment of perfect, complete Buddhahood? No, for "neither with a female body nor with a male body is true enlightenment attained," says Pure Gift. And as these sūtras reveal, from the very moment that one truly commits oneself to the Bodhisattva path, one is no longer either female or male.

## Acknowledgment

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## Notes

1 Taishō *Shinshu Daizōkyō* (hereafter, T.) vol. 11, pp. 547–549, translated by Bodhiruci, T'ang Dynasty (706–713 A.D.). There are three other Chinese translations:

*Fo-shuo hsü-ma-t'i p'u-sa ching (Buddha-bhāṣitā-sumati-bodhisattva-sūtra)* T.12.334, pp. 76–78, translated by Dharmarakṣa (Chu Fa Hu), Western Chin Dynasty (between 266–308 A.D.) (cited in *Ch'u-san-tsang-chi-chi*, hereafter referred to as CSTCC, T.55.2145, p.8a)
*Fo-shuo hsü-ma-t'i p'u-sa ching* (Sanskrit as above), T.12.335, pp. 78–81, attributed to Kumārajīva, Later Ch'in Dynasty (early 5th century A.D.)
*Hsü-ma-t'i ching (Sumati-sūtra)*, T.12.336, pp. 81–83, translated by Bodhiruci (identical with T.11.310(30))
(See also *Tibetan Tripitaka, Peking Edition*, No. 760(30))

2 T.vol.11, pp. 549–550, translated by Bodhiruci, T'ang Dynasty (706–713 A.D.). (See also *Tibetan Tripitaka, Peking Edition*, No. 760(31)) Publication of a complete English translation of the *Mahāratnakūṭasūtra*, including the *Gaṅgottara-sūtra* translated by Yang Tze-ming (Taiwan, 1973), is planned by Dharma Publishing.

3 T.vol. 11, pp. 556–564, attributed to Nieh Tao-chên, Western Chin Dynasty (early 4th century). This translation is not cited in CSTCC; later catalogues attribute several translations to Nieh Tao-chên, but none are mentioned in the early catalogues of Tao-an or Seng-yu. (E. Zürcher, *Buddhist Conquest of China*, Leiden, 1972; 1, p. 68) There are two other Chinese translations:

> *Fo-shuo li-kou-shih-nü ching* (*Buddha-bhāṣitā-vimaladattā-dārikā-sūtra*), T.12.338, pp. 89–97, translated by Dharmaraksa (Chu Fa Hu), Western Chin Dynasty (in 289 A.D.; cited in CSTCC, p. 7c)
> *Te-wu-kou-nü ching* (*Vimaladattā-dārikā-sūtra*), T.12.339, pp. 97–107, attributed to Gautama Prajñāruci, Eastern Wei Dynasty (between 534–550 A.D.) (See also *Tibetan Tripiṭaka, Peking Edition*, No. 760(33))

An English translation by Hsu Yang-chu (Taiwan, 1975) will be included in Dharma Publishing's *Mahāratnakūṭasūtra*.

4 T.vol.II, pp. 623–627, translated by Bodhiruci, T'ang Dynasty (706–713 A.D.). (See also *Tibetan Tripitaka, Peking Edition*, No. 760(40)) An English translation by Hsu Yang-chu will be included in Dharma Publishing's *Mahāratnakūṭasūtra*.

5 See S. Mochizuki, *Bukkyō Daijiten*, Kyoto, 1954, pp. 3618a–b, on the *Mahāratnakūṭasūtra* translation. See also the *Preface* to the *Mahāratnakūṭasūtra* by T'ang Emperor Jui-tsung in T.vol.11, p. 1.—The tradition that there existed in India a large sūtra in many parts called *Mahāratnakūṭasūtra* is found in Chinese documents and in Tibetan. So far as I know, no evidence has yet been found from India itself which could prove that such a text was known there. Many of the 49 individual sūtras are quoted in Indian works, e.g. the *Śikṣāsamuccaya* of Śāntideva, but are never identified as belonging to a single larger text. In China itself, also, until the mid-7th century, those of the 49 sūtras which were known were treated as individual, unrelated texts. Dharmarakṣa, for example, translated at least 13 of the 49 sūtras, without ever suggesting that they were in any way related to each other. The existence of a *Mahāratnakūṭasūtra* is first attested in the *Life of Hsüan-tsang* by Hui Li, where it is stated that Master Hsüan-tsang was urged shortly before his death to translate the whole *Mahāratnakūṭasūtra*. He began the project, but abandoned it almost immediately (664 A.D.), regretting that "the conditions are not yet right among all beings of the world for this sūtra." (Mochizuki, p.3618.b.1–2) Some 40 years after this, in 706 A.D., Bodhiruci and his associates undertook the task at the "request" of Emperor Chung-tsung. They completed it in 713 A.D. Tibetan references to a *Mahāratnakūṭasūtra* are all of much later date—e.g., Buston's and Tāranātha's Histories.

6 On the Empress Wu and the propaganda campaign carried out by her Buddhist supporters on her behalf, see A. Forte, *Political Propaganda and Ideology in China at the End of the 7th Century*, Naples, 1976, and R. W. L. Guisso, *Wu Tse-t'ien and the Politics of Legitimation in Tang China*, Bellingham, Washington, 1978. On Bodhiruci's connection with the translation of the *Ratnamegha-sūtra* (*Pao-yü ching*) and the interpolation made into it in support of Empress Wu's claim to be a Bodhisattva and Buddhist universal monarch, see Forte, pp. 125 ff. The *Mahāmegha* (*Ta-yün ching*) contains a similar passage which is authentic. On the status of the *Mahāmegha*, see Forte, p. 22, note 58. Forte is preparing a full study of Bodhiruci and his activities.

7 See Forte, *op. cit.*, pp. 268–9 and 146–7. See also the composition of the Empress' supporters, the *Commentary on the Meaning of the Prophecy about Shen-huang in the*

*Ta-yün-ching*, in Forte, pp. 245–6. There are other sūtras, besides the *Mahāmegha*, which assert that at a given time and in a given place it is a woman who can best respond to the needs of beings who are to be saved. The Mahāyāna *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* is one: T.12.375, pp. 605.c, 607.a–b; see K. Yamamoto, *The Mahāyāna Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* 1973; Vol. 1, pp. 5–6, 10–11, 14. The *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* is another: see J. Przyluski, "Les *Vidyārāja*, contribution à l'histoire de la magie dans des sectes Mahāyānistes," *Bulletin de l'Ecole Française d'Extrēme Orient*, 23, 1923, p. 309.

8 CSTCC, pp. 7b–9c. On Dharmarakṣa's activities, see Zürcher, *Buddhist Conquest*, 1, pp. 65–70.

9 "Change the female body" is *chuan nü shen* in all four Chinese translations of the *Sumati-sūtra*, the three of the *Pure Gift Sūtra*, the three of the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa* and the single Chinese translation of *Pure Faith's Question*. The three Chinese translations of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* consulted for this essay (T.9.262, 263, 265) write "change into a man," *pien-wei nan-tzu* or *pien-ch'ēng nan-tzu*. The other sūtras just named use this in addition to *chuan nü shen*. Lamotte assumes an original *parinam(asi) strībhava* for "change the female body," based on the Tibetan of the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa: L'Enseignement de Vimalakīrti*, Louvain, 1962, p. 280. Another phrase used is *strī-puruṣa-vyañjanaparivartana* found in the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra*: see G. Nagao, *Index to the Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra*, Tokyo, 1958; Vol. 1, p. 275. The Sanskrit equivalent for "change into a man" in the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* is:

> *sāgaranāgarājaduhitā . . . tat strīndriyaṃ puruṣendriyaṃ ca prādurbhūtaṃ bodhisattvabhūtaṃ cātmānaṃ saṃdarśayati.*

(H. Kern and B. Nanjio, *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra*, St. Petersbourg, 1908–12, p. 265).

10 Pre-Mahāyāna references in: *Aṅguttara-nikāya* (Pāli Text Society, London, 1955), 1, p. 28; *Majjhima-nikāya* (Pāli Text Society, London, 1960), III, pp. 65–66. As Lamotte points out, *Le Traite de la Grande Vertu de Sagessr* (Louvain, 1949), 1, p. 134. n.1. in the *Madhyamāgama* passage which parallels *Majjhima* III, pp. 65–66, there is no mention at all of any obstacles in the way of women: T.1.26. pp. 723–4.) Mahāyāna references: *Saddharmapuṇḍarīhasntra*: Kern and Nanjio, p. 264; T.9.262, p. 35.c.9–11 (Kumārajīva): T.9.263, p. 106.a. 14–16 (Dharmarakṣa). T.9.265, the anonymous early translation of this part of the sūtra, makes no mention of the five obstacles; this translation is older than any other extant versions of the sūtra.—Lamotte, *op.cit.*, also points out that the *Ta-chih-tu-lun*, the great commentary on the *Prajñāpāramitā* (= *Traité*) attributed to Nāgārjuna and translated by Kumārajīva, clearly repeats the traditional formula that there are five superior ranks from which women are barred—and then proceeds to name only four of them: *cakravartin*. Śakra. Māra and Brahmā. This occurs in two separate passages in the text (*Traité*. 1. pp. 134 and 535) which means that the omission of one rank is deliberate. The *Ta-chih-tu lun* thus carefully avoids saying that a woman cannot become a Buddha, for its author must have known that certain Mahāvāna sūtras. above all the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*. do recognize that a woman can become a Buddha.

11 In Buddhist legend, a *rāja-cakravartin*. "wheel-turning universal monarch," is a human being who has performed meritorious acts in past existences and has finally been born as *mahāpuruṣa*. his body marked by the 32 major and 80 minor signs of his status. Such a person is ready to attain supreme temporal authority (*cakravartin*) or Buddhahood itself. Śakra, or Indra, king of the gods, and Brahmā, the creator, and lord of the Brahma-worlds, were borrowed from the ancient Brahmanic pantheon and made into adherents of the Buddha. Māra is the god who tempts and destroys, lord of love and death. In Mahāyāna Buddhist tradition, none of the gods is held to be eternal

and the number of Śakras, Māras, etc., is considered unlimited, so that there is ample opportunity for those who have accumulated certain kinds of merits to be reborn for a time in one or another of these classes of deities.

12 *Dīgha-nikāya* (Pāli Text Society, London, 1960), III, p. 143; *Sutta-nipata* (Pāli Text Society, London, 1965), verse 1022; Lamotte, *Traité*, IV. pp. 1911–12. The Pāli phrase is *kosohita-vattha-guyho*. "having that part which is concealed by clothing covered by a sheath;" *Traité* adds, "like a stallion." For lists of the 32 *lakṣaṇa* see: *Lakkhansuttanta. Dīgha-nikāya* III. pp. 142–179; *Traité*, 1. pp. 271–281, and IV, pp. 1909–1913.

13 E. Conze, *Buddhist Wisdom Books*. London. 1966, pp. 28–29, 60–63. In the *Vajracchedikā* it is specifically pointed out that if the Tathāgata could be recognized by his marks, then a universal monarch would be a Tathāgata: *ibid.*, pp. 62–63. The *Pure Gift Sūtra* says the same (quoting an unnamed text):

> "As the Bhagavan says,
> 'He who sees my visible form,
> Or follows me by means of sound,
> He holds false views—
> This person does not see the Buddha.'
>
> But if (he is to be known) by means of the *Dharmakāya*. The *Dharmakāya* is impossible to perceive. Why? Without eye-consciousness, there is no forming a conception."

(T.12.338, p.92.c.25–27, Dharmarakṣa's version: T.11.310(33), p. 559.a.24–27, and T. 12.339, p. 101.c.1–4, are similar.) This is the same passage, apparently from a *Prajñāpāramitā* text, which is quoted in the *Prasannapadā*: L. de la Vallée Poussin, *Mūlamadhyamakakārikās de Nāgārjuna* (Osnabrück, 1970), p. 448, lines 11–15.

14 *Traité*, IV, pp. 1913–1918.

15 This summary is based on T. 12.334, by Dharmarakṣa, late 3rd century A.D. T.12.335, attributed to Kumārajīva, is nearly identical with T.12.334. T.11.310(31) and T.12.336, two transcriptions of the same translation by Bodhiruci, differ from T. 12.334 and 335 in many details, but the differences are not of major significance. It is possible that T.12.334 and 335 are also two transcriptions of the same translation, for the differences between them are miniscule; there is an occasional difference of a *tzu*, and T.12.334 usually translates technical terms and names while T.12.335 often transliterates them. A translation of a *Hsü-ma-t'i p'u sa ching* is ascribed to Dharmarakṣa by CSTCC, p. 8.a.8, but there appears to be no record of such a work by Kumārajīva earlier than the *Li-tai san-pao-chi* of 597 A.D.; see *K'ai-yüan shih-chiav lu*, T.55.2154, p. 512.b.18.

The major differences between T.12.334 and 335 as they now appear in *Taishō* is the long interpolation made into the text of T.12.335 near the end. It is a lengthy passage from T.14.567, *Fo-shuo fan-chih-nü shou-i ching*, translated by Dharmarakṣa (CSTCC, p. 8.a.2). This text, which has somehow been confused with the *Hsü-ma-t'i p'u-sa ching*, also has a woman as chief figure, and as it happens the discussion going on at this point in T.14.567 fits well enough into the context of T.12.335: the topic is whether persons and dharmas are like illusions. The passage from T.14.567 concludes with the Buddha's prediction that the Brāhmaṇi Shou-i, the protagonist, will "change her female body" (*chuan nü shen*) at the end of her present life because of the wholesome roots she has already planted: that is, she shall never again be reborn as a female. This is the same sort of "change" spoken of in *Pure Faith's Question*, discussed in this essay.

16 The "women" in the *Sumati-* and *Pure Gift Sūtras* turn out to be chilren. Pure Gift is said to be 8 years old in T.11.310(30) and 12 years old in the other two Chinese trans-

lations (T.12.338, 339). Ages are not given for the women in any of the other sūtras discussed, except for the Dragon King's daughter in the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* who is also 8 years old. There are other Mahāyāna scriptures also where the main figure is a child, usually a girl, occasionally a body; examples are the *Bodhisattvacaryānirdeśa* (T.14.488) and *Candrottaradārikāvyākaraṇa* (T.14.480). It seems that the point of presenting a wise young girl as the Buddha's interlocutor is to demonstrate that this child is really a Bodhisattva, has already pursued the Bodhisattva career through many previous existences, has reached a high level of attainment, and nonetheless is now reborn in female form. Femaleness is thus not incongruent with the highest levels of understanding.

Furthermore, these young children have not yet reached puberty, and have thus not yet begun to participate in a woman's traditional way of power: a life committed to creating and nurturing new life. Sumati and Pure Gift commit themselves instead to the perfection of insight, which is a different kind of creativity than that available to them as the result of their biology. This choice is symbolized by the sex change these children undergo in the sūtras, and there maleness is used as image of commitment to the religious life. (Diana Paul's *Women in Buddhism, Images of the Feminine in Mahāyāna Tradition* (Asian Humanities Press, Berkeley, 1979) contains much information on sex transformations in Buddhist literature, but was not available to me when this essay was written.)

The goddess of the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa* is ageless. It may be worth noting, however, that at one point she says she has been in Vimalakīrti's house for 12 years.

17 T.12.334, p. 76.b.18–19. *Hua-sheng*, "transformation-rebirth," is probably Sanskrit *aupapaduka*. *Hua-sheng* occurs in all Chinese translations of the *Sumati-sūtra*, the *Pure Gift Sutra* and *Pure Faith's Question*. According to T.12.334, *hua-sheng* means born by spontaneous generation, without benefit of parents. In the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* (Kern and Nanjio, pp. 260, 455), the *Sukhāvatīvyūha-sūtra* (ed. F. M. Müller, Oxford, 1883; pp. 65, 66), the *Bhaiṣajyaguruvaidūryaprabharājusūtra* (cited *Śikṣāsumuccaya* of Śāntideva, ed. C. Bendall, Osnabrück, 1970; p. 175), spontaneous generation on a lotus is mentioned, as here. It happens as the result of accumulated merits.

18 T.12.334, p. 76.b.19–20. *Shen-tsu, ṛddhipāda*: the four concentrations which are the foundations of supernormal or magic powers. The four are the concentrations giving predominance to zeal (*chanda*), to energy (*vīrya*), to thought (*citta*) and to examination (*mīmāṃsā*). See Buddhaghosa, *The Path of Purification* (*Visuddhimagga*), translated Bhikku Ñānamoli, Colombo, 1964, p. 421; Lamotte, *Traité*, III, pp. 1178–79.

19 The *Sumati-sūtra* bears an evident relationship to the *Sukhāvatīvyūha-sūtra* and possibly to other early Pure Land scriptures, in particular in its acceptance of the doctrine of the saving appearance of the Buddha at the moment of one's death. The *Sumati-sūtra*, and also the *Pure Gift* and *Pure Faith* scriptures, seem to assume a critical attitude toward texts such as the *Sukhāvatīvyūha*, and attempt to interpret coherently some important early Pure Land concepts in the light of the doctrine of emptiness. Thus, their position with respect to the *Sukhāvatīvyūha* is similar to that of the *Pratyutpannabuddhasaṃmukhāvasthitasamādhisūtra*: see Paul Harrison, "*Buddhānusmṛti* in the *Pratyutpannabuddhasaṃmukhāvasthitasamādhisūtra*," *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, 6 (1978), pp. 35–57.

20 The Buddha's reply is detailed, and is a summary of the Bodhisattva path. The more spectacular achievements are actually the product of carefully disciplined selfless conduct capped by the attainment of deep concentration (*samādhi*) and/or full enlightenment: to attain transformation-rebirth on a lotus in the presence of the Buddhas (4) one must pound lotuses to powder and sprinkle them over the Buddha or his relics in a stūpa, make images of Buddhas seated on lotuses, avoid angering others, and attain

supreme realization. To attain supernormal powers and travel to other Buddha-lands (5) one must not interfere with someone who is creating merit nor with someone explaining Dharma, keep a burning lamp in the Buddha-temple, and, entering *samādhi* (*san-mei*), travel to all places. To remain out of Māra's reach (9), always recall the Buddha (*nien-yü-fo, buddhānusmṛti*), be energetic, recall the Dharma (*nien-ching-fa, dharmānusmṛti*) and establish merit. To have the Buddha appear at the moment of death (10), the Bodhisattva must fulfill his/her resolve made for the sake of all beings, try to satisfy all the desires of others, help others with their charitable acts and make offerings to Buddha, Dharma and Saṃgha.

21 In early Buddhist tradition, Mahāmaudgalyāyana is one of the Buddha's two chief disciples, known especially as the master of supernormal powers, the *ṛddhi*. Śāriputra, the other of the two, was known as first among the disciples in understanding, *prajñā*.

22 T.12.334 and 335. In Bodhiruci's translation, Mahāmaudgalyāyana merely observes that the task is difficult, but challenges neither the girl's sex nor her age.

23 On the "act of truth" see pp. 52–54 of this essay.—This passage is T.12.334, p. 77.b.29–c:12.

24 Mañjuśrī is, in Mahāyāna tradition, the wisest of the Bodhisattvas.

25 T.12.334, p. 77.c.13–16. "No abiding" is *wu-so-chu*, which probably translated Sanskrit *apratiṣṭhita* or a related form. This means, the mind, when awakened, does not fix on or attach itself to anything, grasps at no sense-object as support and thus abides or settles no place in particular.

26 T.12.334, p. 77c.25: *k'ung*: *śūnyatā*. "Emptiness" points to the fact that nothing exists absolutely, in and of itself; everything exists relative to other things and nothing can be independently apprehended, fixed upon, settled down in, etc.

27 "Conceived the aspiration to attain enlightenment"; *fa-wu-shang-p'ing-teng-tu-i, anuttarasamyaksaṃbodhicittotpāta*, T.12.334, p. 78.a.6–7. "Tolerance of the notion that dharmas do not arise": *wu-so-ts'ung-sheng-fa-jen, anutpattikadharmakṣānti*, T.12.334, p. 78, a.9. *Bodhicittotpāda* is the first event in the Bodhisattva's career, when he or she first realizes that it is possible to aspire to attain the enlightenment of the Buddhas. *Anutpattikadharmakṣānti* is the gradually won ability to accept and tolerate the all-important notion that phenomena do not come into existence or cease to be, that they are therefore impossible to grasp or to conceive of in any way, that nothing whatever is to be apprehended for nothing can be "fixed."

28 T.12.334, p. 78.a.14. *Wu-so-tė: anupalabdhi, anapalambdha*, etc. Since nothing is fixed or definable, nothing whatever can be apprehended; there are no "real" objects which can serve as supports for ordinary cognition. The Mahāyāna sūtra categorically denies the position of the older Buddhist schools, which had affirmed that maleness and femaleness are irreducible realities, distinguishable by means of the sex organs. (See *L'Adhidharmakośa de Vasubandhu*, translated L. de la Vallée Poussin, Bruxulles, 1971; Vol. I, Ch. I., p. 101.)

29 *Nü-jen t'ai*, T.12.334, p. 78.a.23. Bodhiruci writes "no names of women," *wu-yu nü-jen chih ming*, T.11.310(30), p. 549.a.6–7. I believe both texts may mean by this that there shall be in Sumati's Buddha-land nothing which is to be *distinguished* as female as opposed to male, thus putting the emphasis on the difference between enlightened understanding which does not discriminate "male" and "female" and unenlightened understanding which does. That would be consistent with the debate with Mañjuśrī, just concluded. However, it must be recalled that the *Sukhāvatīvyūhopadeśa*, the commentary on the *Sukhāvatī-vyūha-sūtra* attributed to Vasubandhu, explicitly states that there will be neither bodies nor even names (designations) of women in Amitābha's Pure Land; see M. Kiyota "Buddhist Devotional Meditation: A Study of the *Sukhāvatīvyūhopadeśa*," in *Mahāyāna Buddhist Meditation, Theory and Practice*, Honolulu, 1978, p. 282.

30 The summary follows the Dharmarakṣa translation, T.12.338. The major difference between this and the other two translations, T.11.310(33), attributed to Nieh Tao-chèn of the Western Chin, and T.12.339, attributed to Gautama Prajñāruci of the Eastern Wei, is that Dharmarakṣa's version of Pure Gift's question to the Buddha is clear and concise in 18 parts. The same question in the other two translations is much expanded and set into verse.

31 Pure Gift, like Pure Faith, whose sūtra is also discussed in this essay, is called a daughter of King Prasenjit of Kosala. So, of course, is Queen Śrīmālā in the *Śrīmālāsūtra*. These three "sisters" from the *Mahāratnakūṭasūtra* do not seem to appear in other texts and are not known from Pāli sources as Prasenajit/Pasenadi's daughters. See A. and H. Wayman, *The Lion's Roar of Queen Śrīmālā*, New York, 1974, pp. 3–4, for comments on King Prasenajit's family.

32 None of the Chinese texts uses the expression "*mahāpuruṣa*," but a comparison with the list of the 32 *lakṣaṇa* found in the Pāli *Lakkhanasuttanta* (*Dīghanikāya*, III, pp. 142–179) and in the *Ta-chih-tu-lun* (*Traité*, IV, pp. 1910–13) shows that the *Pure Gift sūtra* enumerates some 20 or 21 of the 32. Dharmarakṣa does not mention the mark of having the penis covered by a sheath, but both of the other translations do.

33 T.12.338, p. 91.a.25: *nien-fo: buddhānusmṛti*. On *buddhānusmṛti*, see p. 52 of this essay; see also note 61.

34 T.12.338, p. 91.b.25: *yin: skandha*. The fundamental experience of being in the world, which is regarded as suffering, is classified by Buddhists into five aggregates or groups: body (*rūpa*), sensation (*vedanā*), notion or perception (*samjñā*), impulses or motivations (*saṃskāra*) and cognition or consciousness (*vijñāna*).

35 T.12.338, p. 91.b.25–c.15. It seems to me that the *Pure Gift Sūtra* attempts to establish some parallels between the biography of the princess and that of Prince Siddhārtha who became Gautama Buddha; the conversation here with her royal father is a notable instance. (Compare Aśvaghosa's *Buddhacarita*, Canto V, verses 28–38 (ed. E. H. Johnston, Lahore, 1936).) The parallelism is rather vague, at best, but it does serve the purpose of helping to establish the princess as a credible candidate for Buddhahood.

36 T.12.338, p. 91.c.18: *yu-wei/wu-wei: saṃskṛta/asaṃskṛta*. According to pre-Mahāyāna Buddhist thought, *saṃskṛta* dharmas come into being dependent on other dharmas which cause and condition them in various ways. *Saṃskṛta* dharmas are characterized by the three marks of phenomenal existence: impermanence (*anityā*), suffering (*duḥkha*) and total absence of a unique essence or "self" (*anātman*). An *asaṃskṛta*, dharma is totally independent of the action of anything else; *nirvāṇa* is *asaṃskṛta*, unconstructed or unconditioned.

37 This part of the *Pure Gift Sūtra* resembles the dialogue between the supremely wise Bodhisattva Vimalakīrti and the other Bodhisattvas and disciples in the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa*: see Lamotte, *L'Enseignement*, pp. 141–218, and Robert A. F. Thurman, *The Holy Teaching of Vimalakīrti*, University Park and London, 1976, pp. 24–41. It is probable that the *Pure Gift Sūtra* was modelled after the *Vimalakīrti*, which appears to be the older of the two texts. The *Vimalakīrti* was first translated into Chinese by Chih Ch'ien between 222–229 A.D. (Lamotte, *op.cit.*, pp. 2–3), the *Pure Gift Sūtra* not until 289 A.D. (CSTCC, p. 7c), although the dates of the original composition of the two sūtras are of course unknown.

38 T.12.338, p. 92.c.6. The "12 causes," *shih êrh yüan*, means *pratītya-samutpāda*, conditioned co-arising, the doctrine that everything that comes into being and is part of phenomenal existence as we experience it, is produced dependent on other things as its causes and conditions. Everything thus exists relative to everything else.

39 T.12.338, p. 92.c.7 *Tzu-jan*: that which exists independently of anything else, in constrast to that which is caused and conditioned by other things. Neither *nirvāṇa*

(according to the older Buddhist schools) nor the perfect enlightenment, *samyaksaṃbodhi*, of the Buddhas (according to Mahāyāna Buddhists) is produced by any cause.

40 T.12.338, p. 92.c.12; *pen-chi*: *bhūtakoṭi*. *Bhūtakoṭi* is one of the synonyms for ultimate truth, *paramārthasatya*, listed at *Mayāvyutpatti* 1705–1723. "Reality" (*bhūta*) is undistorted truth; "limit" (*koṭi*) means the extreme beyond which there is nothing to be known by anyone. (See Thurman, *op.cit.*, p. 163, quoting Sthiramati.)

41 Avalokiteśvara is the Bodhisattva of compassion.

42 If words are held to be fixed and changeless, truly definitive of something real to which they eternally correspond, they are only an obstacle and lead to misunderstanding. If one is not attached to them as absolutes but regards them as useful devices only, they can be used beneficially. This seems to have been Mañjuśrī's point. Pure Gift, however, was getting at the fact that enlightenment itself is completely beyond words. But in Avalokiteśvara's case the question is the possibility of efficacious action in the world and for that purpose words can be used if used properly.

43 T.12.338, p. 93.b.11. *Fa-chieh: dharmadhātu*, which is another of the synonyms for ultimate truth given at *Mahāvyutpatti* 1705–23. *Dhātu* is the basic "element" or the fundamental reality of all the phenomena (*dharma*) which make up our empirical world, including the Dharma taught by the Buddhas. See *Madhyāntavibhāgabhāsya*, I.14 (edited G. M. Nagao, Tokyo, 1964; p. 23).

44 T.12.338, p. 92.c.23. *Fa-shen*: *dharmakāya*, "the body of the Truth"; that is, ultimate truth as the real nature of the Buddha, the identification of Buddha and Dharma. It is contrasted here with the Buddha's material body, *se-shen, rūpakāya*. (See also note 12, above.)

45 Pure Gift's question is much like Sumati's; in fact seven of Sumati's ten points are also raised by Pure Gift. Pure Gift's question, parts 1, 6, 7, 8, 9, 15 and 17 correspond to Sumati's, parts 9, 5, 1, 4, 2, 7 and 3. The Buddha's reply to Pure Gift also resembles that made to Sumati, but, in the case of the seven points the sūtras have in common, the Buddha's replies are not the same in detail, even in the Dharmarakṣa translations of the two texts.

46 T.12.338 and T.11.310(33), say this. T.12.339, a 6th century translation, is milder, saying: it is rare indeed that a woman should cultivate this practice. (Compare also the difference in the Bodhiruci and Dharmarakṣa translations of the *Sumati-sūtra*: see note 22 above.)

47 T.12.338, p. 96.c.24–25. T.12.339 lacks Mahāmaudgalyāyana's second challenge, but does contain Pure Gift's assertion that *bodhi* is not attained by a male or a female.—The resemblance of this exchange to the goddess/Śāriputra contest in the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa* is obvious.

48 Here, as in the later translations of the *Pure Gift Sūtras*, the woman's question to the Buddha has apparently been expanded. The Buddha replies to a 12-part question, but the question in the text is longer than that, repetitive, and the order of the parts is different. In my summary, I follow the organization of the Buddha's reply.

49 There are other sūtras in which the Buddha predicts that at the end of her present life or a series of lives as a female, such and such a woman will thenceforth only be reborn as a male. The *Fan-chih-nü shou-i ching* mentioned above is one (see note 15); the *Ta-yün ching* (*Mahāmegha-sūtra*, T.12.387) is another; a third is the *Śūraṃgamasamādhisūtra* (see E. Lamotte, *La Concentration de la Marche Héroïque, Mélanges Chinois et Bouddhiques*, Vol. 18, Bruxelles, 1965: pp. 198–199 and 216–217.

50 *Hua-jen* at T.11.310(31), p. 549.b.24, *huan-hua-jen* at p. 549.b.29. This would be *nirmāṇa-* or *nirmita-*, something created by means of extraordinary powers, such as those thought to be acquired by the enlightened ones. Powers of this kind are the *ṛddhi*.

51 T.11.310(31), p. 549.c.14: *p'an-yüan, ālambana*: an object on which the mind or the sense-faculties rest or dwell, using it as a support or basis for knowledge.

52 T.11.310(31), p. 550.a.13. *Shih-chi pu-szu-i-chien*: *bhūtakoṭi-acintyadhātu*. These two terms are among the synonyms for ultimate truth (*paramārthasatya*) listed at *Mahāvyutpatti* 1705–1723. On *bhūtakoṭi* see note 40 above. *Acintyadhātu*: *dhātu* is the basic "element" or fundamental reality of all phenomena, and it is inconceivable, or impossible for conventional thought to apprehend: compare note 43 above.

53 Chapter 7 in the Chinese translations. Lamotte numbers it Chapter 6. He and Thurman title it "The Goddess," based on the Tibetan text.

54 *Abhijñā, shen-t'ung* in Chinese, which means "supernatural penetrations." The supernormal or magical powers, the *ṛddhi*, are the one group among the five or six *abhijñā*. See note 72.

55 Whether or not this portion of the text was originally part of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* has long been a matter of controversy. It is on Kumārajīva's translation (T.9.262) and to a lesser extent on the Kern-Nanjio Sanskrit recension that the controversy has centered. For various opinions see: Kern and Nanjio, *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra*, p. 256, n. 5; W. Baruch, *Beiträge zu Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, Leiden, 1938, pp. 40–43 and 35; P. Demiéville, *Bibliographie Bouddhique*, VII-VIII, 1937, pp. 93–96 (review of K. Fuse, *Hokkekyō seiriritsu shi*); Lamotte, *Traité*, I, pp. 294–5, n. 1—For the purposes of this essay, there is no need to comment on this controversy, but only to note the following: the so-called "Devadatta Chapter," equivalent to Kumārajīva's Chapter 12, which includes the Dragon-princess episode, is genuinely ancient, for it was included from the beginning in Dharmarakṣa's translation of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*. He was the first to translate the entire *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* into Chinese, in 286 A.D. (T.9.263). Moreover, this portion of the text appears to have been circulated from an early date in China and in Central Asia as a separate text: T.9.265, which may be as early as the late 2nd or early 3rd century A.D., includes only this part of the text with some introductory material (Zürcher, *Buddhist Conquest*, II, pp. 344–5, n. 246; Baruch, *op. cit.*, pp. 40–42, thinks it is the work of Dharmarakṣa himself). My summary of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* passage follows the texts of Dharmarakṣa and T.9.265, which are quite similar.

56 Kumārajīva adds that she has accumulated merit in past existences.

57 T.9.265, alone among all versions of the text, says nothing about ranks of existence from which women are excluded. Kumārajīva, whose text is more elaborately detailed than Dharmarakṣa's here, adds that a woman's body is impure and not a fit receptacle for the Dharma.

58 Kumārajīva reads: "By means of your supernormal power you will see me attain Buddhahood still more quickly than that." The Sanskrit text has: "If . . . I were a great magician, I should achieve right, perfect, enlightened intuition more quickly yet. Nor would there be any recipient for this jewel." See L. Hurvitz, *Scripture of the Lotus Blossom of the Fine Dharma*, New York, 1976, pp. 201 and 379. Thus these two later versions of the *Lotus* make some reference to magic or to supernatural power in the context of the change, a reference which is quite central in the *Sumati-* and *Pure Gift Sūtras*, and in the Vimalakīrtinirdeśa.

59 The *Śrīmālāsiṃhanādasūtra* now constitutes section 48 of the *Mahāratnakūṭasūtra* in the Chinese and Tibetan Buddhist canons. It exists in two Chinese translations, Cuṇabhadra's 5th century translation (T.12.353) and Bodhiruci's 8th century version (T.11.310(48)). Alex and Hideko Wayman have translated it into English (see note 31).

60 Wayman, *Lion's roar*, p. 18.

61 Guṇabhadra's translation, T.12.353, p. 217.b.14; and see Wayman, pp. 62–63. Śrīmālā's exposition of doctrine is, like Pure Gift's, preceded by the attainment of a

vision of the Buddha: see pp. 31–32 above. Śrīmālā has, however, invoked the presence of the Buddha, while Pure Gift sees him in a meditative vision based on what she has been told about him. After the initial vision, Pure Gift continues to call the Buddha to mind (*buddhānusmṛti*); and Śrīmālā is promised by the Buddha that she will always "see" him in the future. Both texts seem to be referring clearly to the meditation practice *buddhānusmṛti*, even though the Śrīmālā describes it as the supernatural manifestation of an "other" being.

62 Wayman, pp. 64–66. The ten vows are a guide to basic Mahāyāna Buddhist conduct.

63 On the Chinese translations, see Wayman, p. 9; on the original Indian text, see pages 1–2 and 5.

64 Wayman translates "inconceivable transference"; on these concepts, see *Lion's Roar*, pp. 82–86, and n. 58 on p. 85; also pp. 28–31 and 34. Guṇabhadra's text says "inconceivable transformation," *pu-szu-i pien-i*: probably *acintya-pariṇāma*. Bodhiruci has only *pien-i*. "Body made of mind" is *i-sheng-shen: manomayā-kāya*.

65 Wayman, p. 29, also observes that, according to the *Mahāvastu*, a text belonging to the Lokottaravāda school, when a Tathāgata is born he causes no pain to his mother because he comes forth from her body with a body made of mind.

66 For discussions see: *Visuddhimagga* (*Path of Purification*), pp. 409–10, 414–15, 444; *L'Abhidharmakośa*, Vol. 5, Ch. 7, pp. 112–115; *Traité*, IV, pp. 1906–7. See also: *Dīgha-nikāya*, I, p. 77; II, p. 213; *Kathāvatthu* (London, 1894–97), p. 343; *Milindapañha* (London, 1962), p. 343.

67 The *Visuddhimagga* lists 10 *ṛddhi* (Pāli *iddhi*: *Path of Purification*, pp. 414–20; variant lists appear in other Pāli sources): 1) when by resolve one person appears as many; 2) transformation into various shapes (*vikurvaṇa*, Pāli *vikubbanā*); 3) mentally creating something, as projecting a mentally created body from one's physical body (*manomayā*); 4) the success of knowledge, as when eliminating passions through insight knowledge; 5) the success of concentration, as in the inhibition of hindrances through the stages of *dhyāna* meditation; 6) equanimity when meditating on repulsive objects; 7) travelling through the air as birds, deities, etc., can because of *karma*; 8) travelling through the air as the result of merit, as the *cakravartin* does; 9) magical arts, as when one uses spells to fly through the air, show forms in the sky, etc. (*vidyāmayā*, Pāli *vijjāmayā*); 10) success of right application, as in the banishment of sensual desire by renunciation.—The assumption that the attainment of extraordinary levels of understanding of reality naturally entail the attainment of extraordinary powers is common to ancient Indian thought. It has been a Buddhist assumption since the days of the founder, to judge by the literary record. This should occasion no embarrassment. The implication is, simply, that one who knows reality is totally in harmony with truth on a cosmic scale, and thus what appear to be indefatigable limitations on human action for most people are not held to be so for the knower. See W. N. Brown, "The Metaphysics of the Truth Act (**Satyakriyā*), *Mélanges d'Indianisme à la Mémoire de Louis Renou* (Paris, 1968), pp. 174–5; and Paravahera Vajirañāṇa Mahāthera, *Buddhist Meditation*, Colombo, 1962, p. 422. Buddhists have attempted to distinguish between those who acquire and practice supernormal powers for unworthy goals, and those who practice them without attachment and thus for non-selfish reasons. See P. Demiéville, "Sur la mémoire des existences antérieures," *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extréme Orient*, 27, 1927, pp. 289–91.

68 One should use the *kṛtṣṇā* (Pāli *kasinā*), which are "devices" used as meditation objects. There are ten, representing four elements (earth, water, fire, air), four colors (blue, yellow, red, white), space and consciousness. One makes a blue disc, for example, gazes at it, fixes the image in the mind—visualizes it—and uses it to induce *samādhi*, deep concentration. See *Buddhist Meditation*, pp. 139–165.

69 *Ibid.*, p. 440; *Dīgha-nikāya*, I, p. 77.

70 *L'Abhidharmakośa*, Vol. 5, Ch. 7, pp. 119–120. The *Abhidharmakośa* recognizes two classes of *ṛddhi*: that of changing places (*gamana*) and that of creation (*nirmita*): *ibid.*, p. 113. The *Bodhisattvabhūmi* also knows two *ṛddhi* (which can be manifested in various ways): transformation (*pāriṇāmikī*) and creation (*nairmāṇikī*): Har Dayal, *Bodhisattva Doctrine*, pp. 113–16.

71 *Path of Purification*, p. 412; *Buddhist Meditation*, p. 429.

72 Lists of five and of six are known in Mahāyāna and in Hīnayāna texts. The five are: 1) *ṛddhi*, 2) divine hearing, 3) knowledge of others' thoughts, 4) recollection of former existences, 5) divine eye, or knowledge of the death and rebirth of others; the sixth is the knowledge that the influences (*āsravas*) have been destroyed. For useful summaries and references, see *Buddhist Meditation*, pp. 441–453, and Har Dayal, *Bodhisattva Doctrine*, pp. 106ff.—The first five *abhijñā* are accessible to Buddhists and non-Buddhists, but they are said to be inferior attainments in one not on the Buddhist path.

73 *Traité*, IV, p. 1826.

74 *Ibid.*, p. 1823. See also Har Dayal, *op. cit.*, pp. 114–116, quoting *Bodhisattvabhūmi* and other Mahāyāna texts.

75 *Traité*, IV, pp. 1906–7; and p. 1821. Dharmas which have no fixed characteristics are, of course, empty; all the *ṛddhi* are to be considered empty, also, for they lack any support or basis. The *ṛddhi* are as true as anything else, then, since everything is equally empty: *Traité*, III, p. 1195. See also *Aṣṭasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitāsūtra* (ed. P. L. Vaidya, Darbhanga, 1960), pp. 243–44, 252–53, the incident of the appearance of Tathāgatas to Sadāprarudita while he is in *samādhi*.

76 *Traité*, III, pp. 1193–4; Lamotte, *L'Enseignement*, pp. 411–13; Thurman, *op. cit.*, pp. 164–5.

77 See Harrison, *op.cit.*, pp. 38ff., especially p. 45; and *Traité*, III, pp. 1329–62.

78 Harrison, *op.cit.*, pp. 45, 46–48. Harrison's article provides much valuable information on the theory and practice of *buddhānusmṛti* in early Mahāyāna Buddhism.

79 *Ibid.*, p. 50. Harrison's article shows that the *Pratyutpanna-sūtra* clearly interprets *buddhānusmṛti* in terms of the doctrine of *śūnyatā*. He feels that the *Pratyutpannasūtra* criticizes the "materialist" interpretation of *buddhānusmṛti* found in the *Sukhāvatīvyūha*. He points out that the *Sukhāvatīvyūha* asserts that the appearance of Amitābha to the faithful is not like that of a magically created (*nirmita*) body; it is an actual event. He also observes that Bodhisattva Dharmodgata resolves that all beings in his Buddha-*kṣetra* will possess the *abhijñā*, but that the *Pratyutpanna* sees no need for the attainment of magic powers, for one can do everything necessary to meet the Buddha with the mind alone. The *Pratyutpanna* emphasizes *samādhi* exclusively. But then Harrison concludes that the association of *buddhānusmṛti* with the *abhijñā* necessarily implies a "materialist" interpretation of all these experiences. This may indeed be so in the *Sukhāvatīvyūha*, but I hope my essay demonstrates that this is not at all the case with the *Mahāratnakūṭa* sūtras, which see *abhijñā* and *ṛddhi* as well as *samādhi* in the light of *śūnyatā*.

80 Other Sanskrit terms used are: *satyavacana, satyavādya, satyādhiṣṭhāna, satyopavācana, satyavākya, satyaśrāvana*. See W. N. Brown, *op.cit.*, p. 171, quoting E. W. Burlingame, "The Act of Truth (*saccakiriya*): A Hindu Spell and its Employment as a Psychic Motif in Hindu Fiction," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1917, pp. 429–67.

81 For references, see Burlingame, *op.cit.*,; Brown, *op.cit.*, pp. 171–78; Brown, "The Basis for the Hindu Act of Truth," *Review of Religion*, Nov. 1940, pp. 36–45; Alex Wayman, "The Hindu-Buddhist Rite of Truth—an Interpretation," *Studies in Indian Linguistics (Prof. M. B. Emeneau Ṣaṣṭipūrti Volume)*, Poona, 1968, pp. 365–69; examples in *Milindapañha*, pp. 119–123; *Aṣṭasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā*, pp. 382–85;

*Prajñāpāramitā-ratnaguṇasaṃcayagāṭhā*, ed. A. Yuyama, Cambridge, 1976, pp. 82–84.

82 Brown, "Basis . . .," p. 39.

83 Brown, "Metaphysics . . .," pp. 174–5, cites *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, 1.4.10, and *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, 2.2.2.

84 Brown, "Basis . . .," p. 39, and "Metaphysics . . .," p. 172: Damayantī's affirmation of devotion to her future husband Nala in *Mahābhārata*, III.52–79. *Milindadañha*, pp. 121–22: Bindumatī, the prostitute of Pātaliputra, affirms the perfect freedom from discrimination between rich and poor, high and low, with which she performs her services.

85 Wayman, "Hindu-Buddhist Rite of Truth . . .," p. 368.

86 *Pure Gift Sūtra*: T.12.338, p. 93.b.8–12. See p. 33 above.

## Chinese glossary

chuan nü shen 轉女身
fa chieh 法界
fa shen 法身
fa wu shang p'ing teng tu i 發無上平等度意
fan hsing 梵行
Fo shuo a she shih wang nü a shu ta p'u sa ching
佛說阿闍貰王女阿術達菩薩經
Fo shuo fan chih nü shou i ching 佛說梵志女首意經
Fo shuo hsü ma t'i p'u sa ching 佛說須摩提菩薩經
Fo shuo li kou shih nü ching 佛說離垢施女經
Fo shuo wu kuo hsien nü ching 佛說無垢賢女經
Hsü ma t'i ching 須摩提經
hua jen 化人
hua sheng 化生
huan hua jen 幻化人
i sheng shen 意生身
kan lu 甘露
k'ung 空
nieh p'an 涅槃
nien ching fa 念經法
nien (yü) fo 念於佛
nü jen t'ai 女人態
p'an yüan 攀緣
pen chi 本際
pien ch'eng nan tzu 變成男子
pien i 變易
pien wei nan tzu 變爲男子
pu szu i pien i 不思議變易
san mei 三昧
se shen 色身
shen tsu 神足

shen t'ung 神通
sheng szu 生死
shih chi pu szu i chieh 實際不思議界
shih erh yüan 十二緣
Ta pao chi ching, Ching hsin t'ung nü hui 大寶積經淨信童女會
Ta pao chi ching, Heng ho shang yu p'o i hui 大寶積經恒河上優婆夷會
Ta pao chi ching, Miao hui t'ung nü hui 大寶積經妙慧童女會
Ta pao chi ching, Wu kuo shih p'u sa ying pien hui
大寶積經無垢施菩薩應辯會
Te wu kuo nü ching 得無垢女經
ti tzu 弟子
t'o lo ni 陀羅尼
t'ou t'o 頭陀
tsung ch'ih 總持
tzu jan 自然
wu hsin 無心
wu sheng (chê) 無生者
wu so chu 無所住
wu so tê 無所得
wu so ts'ung sheng fa jen 無所從生法忍
wu wei 無爲
wu yu nü jen chih ming 無有女人之名
yin 陰
yu p'o i 優婆夷
yu wei 有爲

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# WHAT, IF ANYTHING, IS MAHĀYĀNA BUDDHISM?*

## Problem of definitions and classifications

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**Summary**

This study investigates some problems regarding the definition of Mahāyāna Buddhism. Tracing the history of the notion in modern scholarship, it pays particular attention to the question of the relation between Mahāyāna and so-called Hīnayāna or Sectarian Buddhism. Finding the commonly used methods of classification which rely on necessary and sufficient conditions to be inadequate to the task, it suggests the alternative employment of polythetic classification, a method which permits a constantly variable set of questions and data to be taken into account in the most flexible and accommodating manner.

Any attempt to focus on a given object of study presupposes, in the very first place, the ability to recognize that relevant object, to distinguish it from the surrounding world, that is, to define the object. And any attempt to sort or order more than one object requires us to classify those multiple objects. Thus, our very attempts to perceive the world around us require us to define and to classify.

Usually, of course, we have no need to consciously reflect on the definitions and classifications we employ. But when we are unsure of the status of an object, when we think there may be some errors in the way objects are organized, when we encounter some apparent disagreement with those with whom we are attempting to communicate concerning an object, or when the very identity or even existence of an object is in question, then we must resort to explicit strategies of definition and classification in order to clarify the discussion.

The identity and the status of Mahāyāna Buddhism are points very much in question, and it is virtually self-evident that communication concerning Mahāyāna Buddhism occasions many disagreements. Therefore, the need for the definition and classification of Mahāyāna Buddhism is obvious. But how we

should approach such definition and classification is somewhat less plain. For it is basically true that in order to define an object one must have some fundamental sense of what it is. I cannot know that my definition of apples must accommodate MacIntosh, Red Delicious and Fuji, but not navel oranges, unless I know beforehand that the former are apples and the latter is not. And yet, this process must be more than circular. I must be able to refine my understanding and my definition, to correct misclassifications or even alter entirely the basis of the classificatory scheme as my familiarity with my object of study grows. How this process may begin in the first place is a question primarily for cognitive scientists, and need not concern us here. We may accept as an irreducible given that an object of study exists, which has been labeled "Mahāyāna Buddhism," and that certain senses of its definition and classification are and have been held by students of this object. We may therefore fruitfully begin by examining some of these ideas.[1]

An apparently fundamental presupposition in at least most of the conceptualizations of Mahāyāna Buddhism so far is that it is one pole of a binary set, that is, it is seen in opposition to something else, some other form of Buddhism. The question then arises how the two are related. Depending on who is talking, the opposite pole may sometimes or even usually be called "Hīnayāna," or by those with somewhat more historical awareness denoted by such names as Sectarian Buddhism, Nikāya Buddhism, Conservative Buddhism, Śrāvakayāna, and recently Mainstream Buddhism (or similar terms in other languages). Whatever the names used, the conceptualization is often basically as follows: First, there is an older portion of monastic Buddhism, usually felt to be conservative, closer to the source, which emphasizes a personal liberation from saṃsāra accessible only to the monk who can devote himself to intensive meditation practice, and so on. This is the Buddhism whose modern living representative is the Theravāda school, and when the term is used it is this which is called Hīnayāna, the small, or more literally inferior, vehicle.

The opposite of this, the Mahāyāna or great, superior vehicle, is opposite in every way. As portrayed by its partisans, Mahāyāna Buddhism can be presented as a sort of Reformation, in which the decayed parts of the old tradition are rejected in favor of new, positive innovations, although these innovations are of course wholly in concert with the original and authentic core intentions of Śākyamuni's Buddhism. The selfishness of the old monastic, world-denying search for escape from rebirth is replaced by the bodhisattva ideal. The bodhisattva is the polar opposite of the Hīnayāna monk, and this Mahāyāna Buddhist hero, active in the world, must work tirelessly for the liberation from suffering of all beings, because he knows that there is no difference between all beings and himself. Thus portrayed Mahāyāna Buddhism is at once both a timeless, universal truth, a path to liberation for all, monk and layperson (man or woman) alike, and a replacement for the older, limited, indeed inferior, Hīnayāna path.

It almost goes without saying that there are too many objections to this

picture, this caricature, really, of Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna to list them all. Among the problems we might number the question of whether this account claims to be history. History happens in time, of course, and Mahāyāna Buddhism so presented seems to be timeless. How can the timeless occur in history? Another objection might be simply that the picture of Hīnayāna presented here is not accurate, a view taken by many modern partisans of Theravāda Buddhism, for example, who nevertheless may accept the basic binary scenario. That such view are prevalent is easily demonstrated.

The late Professor André Bareau, in his article on "Hīnayāna Buddhism" in the *Encyclopedia of Religion*, promoted as a new standard reference, wrote:

> The term *Hīnayāna* refers to the group of Buddhist schools or sects that appeared before the beginning of the common era and those directly derived from them. The word *Hīnayāna* . . . is pejorative. It was applied disdainfully to these early forms of Buddhism by the followers of the great reformist movement that arose just at the beginning of the common era, which referred to itself as the Mahāyāna. . . . It would be more correct to give the name "early Buddhism" to what is called Hīnayāna, for the term denotes the whole collection of the most ancient forms of Buddhism: those earlier than the rise of the Mahāyāna and those that share the same inspiration as these and have the same ideal, namely the *arhat*.[2]

Yet other formulations are more abstract, less quasi-historical. A look at several standard sources, some rather recent, is instructive. The *Bukkyō Daijii* says:

> Daijō. Mahāyāna. In contrast to *Shōjō* [*Hīnayāna]. The Dharma-gate ridden by people of great disposition. *Dai* means vast, *Jō* means carrying. So, this is the Dharma-gate of compassion and wisdom, self-benefit and benefit for others, which carries the people who have the bodhisattva's great disposition, depositing them on the other-shore of Bodhi-nirvāṇa. . . . The Mahāyāna Doctrine is designated as what is preached in order to convert [beings] through this Dharma-gate. In opposition to this is the Hīnayāna, the Dharma-gate of selfish liberation which carries the Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas to the goal of the nirvāṇa of destruction. This is designated the Hīnayāna Doctrine. . . [3]

Nakamura's *Bukkyōgo Daijiten* says:[4] "Great Vehicle. One of the two great schools (*ryūha*) of Buddhist teachings. Arose in the 1st–2nd centuries. In contrarst to the preceding Buddhism, so-called Hīnayāna. It is especially characterized by practice which saves others rather than working for its own benefit, and thus emphasizes becoming a Buddha. . . ." Oda's *Bukkyō Daijiten* says:[5] "*Dai* is distinguished from *Shō* [small]. *Jō* means vehicle, and refers to Doctrine, that is

the Great Teaching. Hīnayāna is the teaching which causes [beings] to seek for the quiescent nirvāṇa of the wisdom of destruction of the body, within which are distinguished the Śrāvaka and Pratyekabuddha, while the Mahāyāna is the teaching which opens up omniscience, within which are distinguished the One Vehicle and the Three Vehicles." In his short description at the beginning of his long article "Daijō" in the *Hōbōgirin*, Hubert Durt states that Mahāyāna is a "Metaphorical term describing the soteriological movement, divided into many tendencies, which developed within Buddhism with the aim of promoting the conduct of the Bodhisattva as the ideal of practice for the followers of the movement."[6] Mochizuki's *Bukkyō Daijiten* says:[7] "Great Vehicle. In contrast to Hīnayāna. That is, the Dharma-gate which practices the six perfections, saves all beings, and converts bodhisattvas who aspire to become buddhas." It is clear from this sample that, at least in our standard sources, the explicit formulations of the definition and classification of Mahāyāna Buddhism almost universally contrast it with "Hīnayāna."

But even if we do not use the term Hīnayāna, which without question is in origin intentionally caluminous, is it right to see the structure of Buddhism as essentially dichotomous (or if we take another approach which includes the so-called Vajrayāna, tripartite)? Or from another point of view, is the best way to think about—that is, to try to conceptualize, define and classify—Mahāyāna Buddhism really to divide things into Mahāyāna and non-Mahāyāna at all?

This seems to be the way things have always been done, with Mahāyāna contrasted either doctrinally or institutionally with Hīnayāna or Sectarian Buddhism. And it might even be possible to trace one source of this formulation in modern scholarship. Most scholars who have expressed themselves concerning the institutional relations between Mahāyāna and Sectarian Buddhism seem to have been motivated by their interpretations of remarks made in the medieval period by Chinese pilgrims, travellers from Buddhist China to Buddhist India who kept records which report in detail the Mahāyāna or Hīnayāna populations of various monasteries in India and Indian Central Asia. It is partly on the basis of these accounts that Étienne Lamotte, for example, wrote his highly influential study on the origins of the Mahāyāna.[8] Since the general and overall honesty and accuracy of the information in these pilgrim's records can be verified from archaeological and other evidence, there seemed *prima facie* to be little reason to question their accounts. But the interpretation of these documents is not always straightforward, and it is perhaps ironic that Auguste Barth, basing his ideas of the relationship between the Mahāyāna and the Hīnayāna on exactly the same accounts, reached conclusions diametrically opposed to those of Lamotte.

Among the writings of the Chinese traveller-monks Faxian, Xuan-zang and Yijing,[9] that of Yijing, the *Record of Buddhist Practices*, dating from 691, is the only one which makes a point of carefully defining its terminology. This makes it, for us, probably the most important of the available accounts. Yijing's crucial definition runs as follows.[10] "Those who worship the Bodhisattvas and read the Mahāyāna Sūtras are called the Mahāyānists, while those who do not perform

these are called the Hīnayānists." In a phrase immediately preceding that just quoted, it seems to be stated that schools or sects may belong to either vehicle, and on this basis Junjirō Takakusu already observed over one hundred years ago, in the introduction to his translation of Yijing's work, that "I-Tsing's statement seems to imply that one and the same school adheres to the Hīnayāna in one place and to the Mahāyāna in another; a school does not exclusively belong to the one or the other."[11] Only two years later, Auguste Barth offered his detailed comments on Yijing in the form of a review of the work of Takakusu and Chavannes.[12] Discussing Yijing's statement about the definition of the Mahāyāna, Barth concluded that "there were Mahāyānists and Hīnayānists in all or in almost all the schools."[13] He went on to draw out some of the implications of this observation:[14]

> The Mahāyāna thus appears to us as a religious movement with rather vague limits, at the same time an internal modification of primitive Buddhism and a series of additions to this same Buddhism, alongside of which the old foundations were able to subsist more or less intact. . . . It is thus very probable that there are many degrees and varieties in the Mahāyāna, and that it is perhaps something of an illusion to hope that, when we define that of Asaṅga or Vasubandhu, for example, we will thereby obtain a formula applicable to all the others. All things considered, we can suppose that things here are as they so often are in this so unsteady and murky Buddhism, and that the best way of explaining the Mahāyāna is to not try too hard to define it.

At the same time, however, Barth remained extremely cautious. He suggested, even argued, that it was in Yijing's own interests to persuade his audience that there was little or no fundamental difference between the Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna, since Yijing was trying to propagandize among his Chinese compatriots, almost all exclusive Mahāyānists, the Vinaya of the Sarvāstivāda.[15] This is an insightful observation, and illustrates Barth's acute sensitivity to the multiple factors which could have been at work in the background of the statements of any of our witnesses.

Barth's approach and his observations seem to have remained unnoticed by most scholars until Jean Przyluski, an extremely creative and iconoclastic scholar, again remarked on the relation between the Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna. Having discussed various Mahāyāna scriptures in his seminal study on the early Buddhist Councils, Przyluski concluded:[16]

> As rapid and as incomplete as it is, this discussion of the Mahāyānist canons allows us at least to recognize the insufficiency of the theories which have prevailed until now in European learning. The Mahāyāna has long been represented as a unique school which developed from the first in the regions of North-west India, from whence it spread to

> Central and East Asia. It is a subdivision of "Northern Buddhism." But this so-called "Northern Buddhism" is only a geographical expression. It already appeared to open minds, like a shower of diverse sects oriented toward the North, East or West, and more precisely, each sect resolves itself in its turn into two distinct parts, one Mahāyānist, the other Hīnayānist. Without doubt one cannot negate the existence of aspirations, of great dogmas common to all the Mahāyāna factions. But these convergent tendencies do not cause us to fail to recognize the remoteness of the original groups. Our analysis of the canons has shown us that there had not been a sole Mahāyāna issued from the Sarvāstivāda school. One can also speak, up to a certain point, of a Dharmaguptaka Mahāyāna, a Mahāsāṁghika Mahāyāna, and so on. The establishment of this fact, in addition to its obvious historical interest, has the advantage of allowing us, on many points, a new and more precise interpretation of documents and of facts.

Noting the opinion of Louis Finot that there is some contradiction between Yijing's description of Buddhism in Champa and the epigraphical evidence, Przyluski responded as follows:[17]

> The contradiction between the testimony of Yijing and epigraphy is only apparent. It seems inexplicable that for such a long time the Mahāyāna has been taken as a 19th sect, separate from the Hīnayānistic 18 sects. But all difficulty disappears at the moment when one admits the existence of a Sarvāstivādin Mahāyāna and a Sammitīya Mahāyāna—that is to say, of groups the canon of which was formed out of one or many baskets consistent with the doctrine of the Great Vehicle and the many Śrāvakapiṭakas belonging to the Mūlasarvāstivāda or Saṃmitīya proper.

Soon after the publication of Przyluski's remarks they and the earlier observations of Barth were noticed by Louis de La Vallée Poussin. La Vallée Poussin observed that the question of "sect" is a matter of Vinaya, of monastic discipline, and that the designation "school" is a matter of Abhidharma or doctrine. "There were in all the sects, in all the groups subject to a certain archaic Vinaya, adherents of the two schools, Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna, schools which are further subdivided into Sautrāntikas and so on."[18]

La Vallée Poussin has clarified a very important distinction here, although later scholars have not always followed his lead. Since some confusion seems to have been caused heretofore by a certain inconsistency in vocabulary, it is perhaps best to clarify our terms. By the term "sect" I follow La Vallée Poussin and intend a translation or equivalent of the term *nikāya*. A *nikāya* is defined strictly speaking not by any doctrine but by adherence to a common set of monastic rules, a Vinaya. One enters a *nikāya* or sect through a formal ecclesiastical act

of ordination, an *upasampadā karmavācanā*. My use of the term "sect" here differs, therefore, from at least one established modern usage. A common presumption of Western uses of the term "sect" posits a Weberian dichotomy, even an antagonism, between Church and sect.[19] This is not the case for the sects of Indian Buddhism, as I use the term. *All* independent institutional groups in Indian Buddhism, as defined by their (at least pro forma) allegiance to their own governing Vinaya literature, are sects. The Buddhist Church in India is constituted by the sects.[20] There is no implication here of schism, of an old and established institution set off against a new and innovative one.[21]

The term "school," on the other hand, refers to the notion designated in Sanskrit by the word *vāda*. Schools are defined primarily by doctrinal characteristics, and are associations of those who hold to common teachings and follow the same intellectual methods, but they have no institutional existence. A Buddhist monk must belong to a sect, that is to say, he must have one, unique institutional identification determined by the liturgy according to which he was ordained.[22] There is no evidence that there was any kind of Buddhist monk other than one associated with a Sectarian ordination lineage until some Chinese Buddhists began dispensing with full ordination and taking only "bodhisattva precepts."[23] To break the ordination lineage in these terms would be to sever oneself from the ephemeral continuity which guarantees the authenticity of one's ordination by tracing it back to a teacher ordained directly by the Buddha in an unbroken line of teachers, each of whom had in turn received ordination from such a properly ordained teacher. Thus the mythology is such that if one's ordination cannot be traced back in a line which begins at Śākyamuni, it is not valid. It is again La Vallée Poussin who offers a crucial observation:[24]

> All the Mahāyānists who are *pravrajita* [renunciants] renounced the world entering into one of the ancient sects.—A monk, submitting to the disciplinary code (Vinaya) of the sect into which he was received, is 'touched by grace' and undertakes the resolution to become a buddha. Will he reject his Vinaya?—'If he thinks or says "A future buddha has nothing to do with learning or observing the law of the Vehicle of Śrāvakas," he commits a sin of pollution (*kliṣṭā āpatti*).'

In the same study, La Vallée Poussin concluded thus.[25]

> From the disciplinary point of view, the Mahāyāna is not autonomous. The adherents of the Mahāyāna are monks of the Mahāsāṁghika, Dharmaguptaka, Sarvāstivādin and other traditions, who undertake the vows and rules of the bodhisattvas without abandoning the monastic vows and rules fixed by the tradition with which they are associated on the day of their Upasampad [full ordination]. In the same way, at all times every bhikṣu was authorized to undertake the vows of the dhūtaguṇas . . . .

> The Mahāyāna, in principle and in its origins, is only a 'particular devotional practice,' precisely a certain sort of mystical life of which the center is the doctrine of pure love for all creatures: this mystical life, like the mystical life of ancient Buddhism which was oriented toward Nirvāṇa and personal salvation, has for its necessary support the keeping of the moral laws, the monastic code. The Mahāyāna is thus perfectly orthodox and would have been able to recruit adepts among those monks most attached to the old disciplinary rule.

After the time of La Vallée Poussin, few indeed are the scholars who seem to have noticed these observations or pursued the study of the Mahāyāna with an eye on this hypothesis. One scholar who has, however, paid attention to the hypotheses of La Vallée Poussin is Heinz Bechert.[26] I think, however, that Bechert has gone beyond where his evidence leads him. He writes, for example:[27]

> We learn from the accounts of Chinese pilgrims, and from the Indian Buddhist sources themselves, that there had been Mahāyānic groups in various nikāyas. Thus, a late text like the Kriyāsangrahapañjikā still emphasizes that the adherents of Mahāyāna must undergo the ordination or upasampadā as prescribed by their nikāya before being introduced as Mahāyāna monks by another formal act. Thus, the outside forms of the old nikāyas were preserved, though they did not retain their original importance.

The claim that the old nikāyas did not retain their original importance is not defended, and as far as I know there is little evidence that would suggest this is true. What is more, without specifying what we think "their original importance" was, how would we begin to investigate whether this may or may not have been retained? In another formulation, Bechert has suggested the following:[28]

> For those who accepted Mahāyāna, their allegiance to their nikāya was of quite a different nature from that of a Hīnayānist: it was the observance of a vinaya tradition which made them members of the Sangha, but it no longer necessarily included the acceptance of the specific doctrinal viewpoints of the particular nikāya. In the context of Mahāyāna, the traditional doctrinal controversies of the nikāyas had lost much of their importance and, thus, as a rule, one would not give up allegiance to one's nikāya on account of becoming a follower of Mahāyānistic doctrines originating with monks ordained in the tradition of another nikāya.

Whether or not this is partially or even totally true, I know of no evidence which might decide the matter either way, and neither does Bechert provide any. It is

worth keeping firmly in mind that we almost always wish to say more than the available evidence actually allows. These are urges which, if not resisted, will almost surely lead our studies astray.[29]

One thing that the approaches mentioned above have in common is their implicit assumption that the concept of Mahāyāna movements is meaningful, but only in the context of some contrast with what is not Mahāyāna. This is generally understood to refer to pre-Mahāyāna Buddhism, although it need not, and I think in very many cases in fact certainly does not. This non-Mahāyāna Buddhism is often designated in modern writing "Hīnayāna." I think it is quite certain, however, that the referent of the term "Hīnayāna," when it occurs in Buddhist texts themselves, is never any existent institution or organization, but a rhetorical fiction. We can say rather freely, but I think quite accurately, that "Hīnayāna" designates "whomever we, the speakers, do not at the present moment agree with doctrinally or otherwise here in our discussion."[30] Although the example is not from the earliest period, the scholar Asaṅga's comment in his *Mahāyānasūtrālaṁkāra* "That which is inferior (namely, the Hīnayāna) is truly inferior,"[31] can hardly be construed as referring to an actual, specific, and institutionally identifiable group of Hīnayāna Buddhists. In addition, the rhetorical context in which we find such references suggests that such "enemies" were imagined to be contemporary, which in turn is a strong indication that whatever "Hīnayāna" might refer to, it is not pre-Mahāyāna Buddhism as such. A fundamental error is thus made when we imagine references to "Hīnayāna" in Mahāyāna literature to apply to so-called Sectarian Buddhism, much less to Early Buddhism.[32]

It may be largely due to the numerous vitriolic references in Mahāyāna literature to the "inferior vehicle" that some scholars, such as Stephen Kent, have found it hard to believe that there could be any sort of continuity between Sectarian Buddhism and the Mahāyāna.[33] This misunderstanding is based on a series of erroneous identifications, which we can encapsulate as the equation: Hīnayāna = Śrāvakayāna = actual identifiable nikāyas. Sasaki Shizuka points to the equally erroneous equation: *śrāvakayāna* = *śrāvaka* = *bhikṣu*.[34] While it is probably true that all *śrāvakas* are *bhikṣus*,[35] the reverse certainly does not follow. The polemical attacks on *śrāvakas* that we find in some, although certainly far from all, Mahāyāna scriptures should be understood as a criticism not of all monks but of those who do not accept the Mahāyāna doctrines. Since the term Hīnayāna is not an institutional label but an ideological one, we might even loosely translate it as "small-minded." The term embodies a criticism of certain types of thinking and of certain views, but does not refer to institutional affiliations. I therefore strongly doubt, pace Kent, that the Mahāyāna literature which criticizes the Hīnayāna is a product of sectarians who isolated themselves, or were isolated, physically or institutionally. Rather, I would suggest that it is a product of groups which doctrinally opposed other groups, quite possibly within one and the same community or group of communities.

If Mahāyāna Buddhism is not institutionally separate from the sects of Sec-

tarian Buddhism, and if it might exist in some form more tangible than a set of abstract doctrinal ideas, how then can we define it, how can we locate it? Let us posit that Mahāyāna Buddhists were the authors of Mahāyāna scriptures, and a Mahāyāna community was a community of such authors. One immediate and fundamental result of this formulation is that we must stop referring, at the very least provisionally, to "the Mahāyāna" in the singular. Until and unless we can establish affinities between texts, and therefore begin to identify broader communities, we must—provisionally—suppose each scripture to represent a different community, a different Mahāyāna.[36] We should note here that if each Mahāyāna scripture represents a different Mahāyāna community, we have gone farther in the direction of diversity than Barth, Przyluski, La Vallée Poussin, and others who suggested that we think in terms of Sectarian Mahāyānas, a Sarvāstivāda Mahāyāna, a Dharmaguptaka Mahāyāna and so forth. In fact, theoretically speaking we might even go farther still and say, with modern theorists, that each *reading* of a work which produces a new interpretation allows, although it does not necessitate, the creation of a new community. Radical re-readings, which amount to re-writings, may indeed create new communities, but access to this level of the tradition(s) is certainly impossible to obtain and so, from a practical point of view, we are surely justified in accepting the generalities of a given text as an integral unit, at least as a starting point.

If each Mahāyāna scripture denotes a Mahāyāna community, we must next ask ourselves: What, then, is a Mahāyāna scripture? As, again, only a starting point, a very practical and reasonable answer is to posit that those scriptures identified by tradition, for instance in the Tibetan and Chinese canonical collections, as Mahāyāna sūtras should be so considered.[37] In fact, efforts to second-guess such traditional attributions are virtually always based on preconceptions modern scholars hold concerning the nature of the Mahāyāna, and almost never on a considered and methodologically sophisticated approach to the sources.

I have mentioned that I think it more helpful, if not more accurate, to refer to multiple Mahāyāna groups, to communities of the early Mahāyāna, rather than to employ the definite article "the" before the word Mahāyāna. Since I have defined these communities by the texts they produced, which are of course multiple, it is natural that we should speak of these Mahāyānas in the plural. It is a possible but not certain hypothesis that there were actual people, perhaps monks, arranged in multiple groups sharing Mahāyānistic ideologies. It is again possible, but not certain, that various monastic communities distributed geographically over India on the one hand, and associated with different sects of Sectarian Buddhism on the other, produced different varieties of early Mahāyāna Buddhism. If this is so, almost certainly, then, later on there was a kind of leveling, perhaps by the time of Nāgārjuna, leading to a more generalized "Mahāyāna," in which originally distinct sources were treated and utilized equally.[38] The suggestion of this type of diversity in the early stages of the movement is in harmony with the fact that, while apparently having some characteristics in common, various early Mahāyāna sūtras express somewhat, and sometimes radically,

different points of view, and often seem to have been written in response to diverse stimuli. For example, the tenor of such (apparently) early sūtras as the *Kāśyapaparivarta* and the *Rāṣṭrapālaparipṛcchā* on the one hand seems to have little in common with the logic and rhetoric behind the likewise putatively early *Pratyutpannasaṃ mukhāvasthita*, *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* or *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* on the other.

When we read this sūtra literature, we should make an attempt to pay particular attention to its lateral internal stratification. By this I intend an analogy to archaeology, and would suggest that we should be able to distinguish not only vertical, which is to say chronological, layers, one text being later than another, but different horizontal strata of texts which may be more or less contemporaneous. Texts dating to the same period may still belong to different lineages, and may be the products of distinct communities. Many scholars seem, perhaps without properly having considered the matter, to have tried to fit all Mahāyāna literature (or more honestly, the small portion of it with which they are familiar) into one chronological progression, with little regard for the possibility that we may be dealing not with one tradition but with many. A conflation of the multiple traditions of Mahāyāna literature into "the" Mahāyāna, that is into a unitary and monolithic entity, inevitably produces considerable confusion and apparent contradiction.[39]

The very nature of this approach, letting the many texts define the communities which are grouped together under the general rubric of Mahāyāna, means on the one hand that the community of concerns which we may extract from a single text cannot represent more than one aspect of the many faceted Mahāyāna. On the other hand, it suggests that a simultaneous study of multiple texts might detect generalized patterns, but is unlikely to uncover the worldview of a particular community of authors. It seems reasonable then that we might speak about the Mahāyāna ideology imagined by one text or group of texts without prejudicing the Mahāyāna ideology we may be able to extract from other sources. Where there is overlap between this ideology and that found in other (early) Mahāyāna scriptures, we may dare to speak of these overlapping features as characteristic of some generalized Mahāyāna doctrine. There will be other features which, while allowing us to group our texts together into, and as representing, a community of concerns, at the same time set this community apart from others.

In addition to the problem of the multiplicity of texts, we must also confront the problem of the inherently fluid state of any single text itself. If we insist upon the vertical and horizontal stratification of the sūtra literature, are we justified in treating admittedly diverse sources such as late Sanskrit manuscripts, multiple Chinese and Tibetan translations, and other types of evidence, as a single unit? Must we not rather treat each and every element in isolation? One practical solution to the potential infinite regress we confront here is to treat as representative of an imagined authorial community those materials which have a community of character or of value. To treat as a unit materials which we may

identify with each other conceptually means that we may well be dealing occasionally with chronologically and geographically heterogeneous materials, and we must keep this fact in mind.[40]

Given that the sources through which we might locate Indian Mahāyāna Buddhism and its communities are by definition its texts, it is natural that in investigating the origins and early history of the Mahāyāna movement we should wish to avail ourselves of the earliest accessible evidence. Unfortunately, we have absolutely no reliable way of determining in just what that might consist. For despite a rather facile application of the designation "early Mahāyāna," this usage is rather disingenuous. The reason lies in the fact that we have very little idea about either what sources belong to the earliest period of the Mahāyāna movement, or even how we might find that out. There may in fact be good circumstantial grounds for assuming, as Paul Harrison has suggested,[41] that none of the extant examples of Mahāyāna literature date, in the form in which we have them, to the period of the movement's rise, and so even the very earliest recoverable materials must in some sense be called "medieval" (in the chronological sense).[42] Almost the only hint we get to the relative chronology of comparatively old Mahāyāna materials comes from their Chinese translations, dating back to roughly the second and third centuries C.E. What makes us suspect that the literature is older still is the impression we get from this material (which is, admittedly, not always easy to understand) that it already represents a considerable degree of sophistication and development, rather than recording the first few rough steps toward an expression of a new and raw set of ideas. If this impression is right, we will probably never have access to the oldest stratum of the Mahāyāna tradition's literary expressions. This is a crucial point, since in fact the tradition's literary remains are virtually all we have. Whatever archeological or other evidence we might wish to employ can be contextualized and given meaning only through an examination of the tradition's literature.

Because the content of Mahāyāna texts shows a very high degree of familiarity—we might say a total familiarity—with virtually all aspects of Sectarian Buddhist thought and literature, it is very difficult to believe that the authors of these texts, the de facto representatives of the Mahāyāna communities, were other than educated monks. It is difficult to imagine that the Mahāyāna sūtras could have been written by anyone other than such monks or, more likely, communities of such monks. If we follow the classical reasoning as expressed in the normative Vinaya literature, the only way to become a monk would have been through an orthodox ordination lineage, one which traces its imprimatur directly back to Śākyamuni Buddha. At a very early period, perhaps by the time of the so-called Second Council (although we cannot be sure about this), there would have been no way to become a monk except through orthodox ordination into one of the sectarian Vinaya traditions. Unless there existed a tradition of which we are totally ignorant—and this is far from impossible—the only way for one to become a monk (or nun) in the Indian Buddhist context was through orthodox ordination. If we follow the assumptions just articulated, the

immediate implication is that all authors of Mahāyāna sūtras, that is to say all those who made up the communities we have defined as representative of the early Mahāyāna, were at one time members of orthodox ordination lineages, members of sects as I have defined them above.

Could the monk-authors of these texts, our prototypical early Mahāyānists, have split from those ordination lineages and the sects they defined? What would it mean to leave such a sect and start another sect, given that the normatively defined ordination lineage could not—in its own terms—be broken? Without a Vinaya of their own, the breakaway monks would have been unable to carry out further ordinations of new monks in their own lineage. If correct, this suggests that most probably it would not have been possible, in an Indian Buddhist context, for one to become a Buddhist monk at all without ordination in an orthodox ordination lineage. Again, if this is true, Mahāyāna communities could not have become institutionally independent of Sectarian communities, for they would have had no way of effecting the continuity of the movement other than by conversion of already ordained monks. Such an approach to the maintenance of a religious community, while not uninstanced in world religions, is relatively rare, and difficult to maintain. Moreover, if these Mahāyānists were either doctrinal rebels or reactionaries—which is also far from sure—how could they have coexisted with their sectarian brethren? Would it have been necessary to establish a new sect in order to freely profess their new doctrines and beliefs? It would not, if dissent in matters of doctrine was permissible.

The way in which sectarian affiliations are decided is not necessarily connected with questions of doctrine. An institutional split in a Buddhist community is technically termed *saṁghabheda*. It has been suggested at least since the time of the Meiji period Japanese scholar Maeda Eun that early and fundamental Mahāyāna doctrines have much in common with the teachings of the Mahāsāṁghika sect.[43] It is therefore of great interest to notice the Mahāsāṁghika definition of *saṁghabheda* as offered in the Mahāsāṁghika Vinaya. *Saṁghabheda* is constituted by a failure of all the monks resident in the same sacred enclosure (*sīmā*) to communally hold the *uposatha* rite.[44] Differences over doctrine are *not* grounds for *saṁghabheda* in the Mahāsāṁghika Vinaya. In fact, what appears to be a contrast with the views of other sects, some of which allow doctrinal disputes to split the community (*cakrabheda*), has been shown by Shizuka Sasaki to be in reality a virtual universality of opinion that the only true cause of schism, at least in the times after the Buddha's nirvāṇa, is failure to hold joint rituals (*karmabheda*).[45] On the other hand, this virtual uniformity of opinion suggests that the explicit position of the Mahāsāṁghika in this regard cannot serve as evidence for its particular connection with a nascent Mahāyāna movement.

We have been concerned so far mostly with generalities of received wisdom, accepted ideas which I suggest can no longer be accepted. It might be helpful to briefly indicate here in particular why I have found myself unable to accept many of the ideas of perhaps the two most influential recent scholars of

Mahāyāna history, Hirakawa Akira and Étienne Lamotte. The most characteristic ideas of Hirakawa and Lamotte are, respectively, that stūpa worship implies a lay community at the heart of the earliest Mahāyāna, and that Mahāyāna texts are anti-clerical. At least for Lamotte, moreover, these two ideas are not unrelated.

According to Buddhist canon law, the putatively normative stipulations of the Vinayas, the distinction between laity and monastics is defined by the difference in the precepts they take. A monk has taken the primary and secondary initiations (*pravrajya* and *upasampadā*), and has vowed to uphold a set of monastic rules (the *prātimokṣa*). A lay follower of Buddhism has taken the three refuges (in the Buddha, Dharma and Saṅgha) and perhaps five, or eight, vows. In addition, the layman or laywoman may vow to give up not only forbidden sexual activity but all sexual activity whatsoever. One who takes the three refuges, or more, is called an *upāsaka* (male lay disciple) or *upāsikā* (female lay disciple).[46] There would in addition of course be those who casually gave alms and so forth, but these are not considered or recognized to be Buddhist lay supporters in any formal way. In spite of the availability of this terminology, many Mahāyāna sūtras generally seem to prefer the set of terms *pravrajita* and *gṛhastha*, that is, renunciant and householder, a distinction that requires separate discussion.

Richard Robinson has suggested that rather than these technical and strict categories a more useful distinction is that between "laicizing" and "monachizing," and "secularizing" and "asceticizing."[47] By this Robinson means to emphasize tendencies toward lay participation or lay control, as opposed to monastic control, or a greater concern with worldly activities or values as opposed to the values of renunciation and ascetic practice. There is quite a bit of grey space in Robinson's definition, but it serves to highlight the fact that a strict distinction between lay and monastic, regardless of the roles the individuals play in the social life of the community, can be misleading. His distinction allows us to speak of an asceticized laity, for example a householder who vows to give up sex with his wife altogether, or secularized monastics, for example a monk who lives at a royal court.

Lamotte, who strongly advocated the idea that the Mahāyāna represents the triumph of lay aspirations in Buddhism,[48] used the expression "anti-clerical" to characterize early Mahāyāna sūtras, pointing specifically in his influential paper on the subject to the *Rāṣṭrapālaparipṛcchā*, which he calls an "anti-clerical tract."[49] It is true that the single verse he quotes appears to be a violent criticism of monks,[50] but a glance at the context makes it quite clear that the *Rāṣṭrapālaparipṛcchā* is not criticizing monks in general and is far from anti-clerical—rather quite the opposite. The text is concerned with (future) evil and degenerate monks, and the decay of the true teaching. In this sense the text might be considered more a reactionary document than a revolutionary one. What we see here is not anti-clericalism, but again rather the opposite: a concern with the purification of the clergy, and the related assertion of its superiority and rightful place as the sole legitimate representative of Buddhist orthodoxy. I have addressed this

theme in another paper,[51] and observe there how pervasive this ideology is in Buddhism, not only in Mahāyāna sūtras, but even in earlier canonical texts belonging to the Nikāya/Āgama corpus.

If, as I have argued, the Mahāyāna came into existence and persisted within pre-existing Buddhist social and institutional structures, it would follow that all monastic members of the Mahāyāna should have been associated with a traditional ordination lineage. I have further suggested that the Mahāyāna texts must have been written by monks, and have defined my notion of a Mahāyāna community as one constituted by the authors of these texts. There may, of course, have also (or instead) been another type of Mahāyāna community, but it would be incumbent upon whomever asserted this to be the case to show how this could have been so. Hirakawa Akira is probably the most influential of those who do not believe the earliest Mahāyāna to have been a monastic movement, and he suggests that formal Mahāyāna Buddhist social units did exist independently of the traditional sectarian saṅghas. He has offered an alternative solution to our questions, centering on the suggestion that what made such non-monastic Mahāyāna groups possible was their orientation around stūpa worship.

Hirakawa holds the Mahāyāna to have been a movement promoted in contrast to Nikāya communities by non-ordained people who devoted themselves to stūpa worship.[52] One of the main presuppositions behind Hirakawa's thinking on this subject is the contrast between Nikāya Buddhism and the Mahāyāna, in which he was perhaps influenced by the writings of Nalinaksha Dutt.[53] The importance of this should be clear. If we compare, as we inevitably must, Mahāyāna Buddhism with its ubiquitous background, mistaken ideas about that background or pre-existing Buddhism will lead to erroneous conclusions about the situation of the Mahāyāna. In one particular regard I think it is precisely here that Hirakawa has gone astray.

Hirakawa's ideas are based on a very wide reading in the Vinaya literatures, Āgamas, and Mahāyāna sūtras. Basically stated, his position is that the Mahāyāna grew out of lay communities institutionally external to the Nikāya Buddhist communities. These lay communities grew up around stūpas not associated with any Nikāya Buddhist sect, and the lay groups managed and administered the stūpas. Gradually they infiltrated the monastic communities, and in response to this there was a transformation within the monastic communities in which some of these outside ideas and practices were adopted. This is the genesis of the Mahāyāna.

Hirakawa's argument for this theory runs as follows: According to the *Mahāparinirvāṇa sūtra*, just before the death of the Buddha he forbade monastic participation in the stūpa cult, ruling that this was the domain of the laity. In addition, since the cult of the stūpa consists in worship offered with flowers, perfumes, dance, and music, it would not have been possible for monks to participate, since such activities were forbidden to them by the Vinaya. In addition, the fact that there are no inscriptions on stūpa sites identifying a stūpa as belonging to a particular sect proves that stūpas were not the domain of the monastic

community. All of this shows that, despite some suggestions that the Mahāyāna grew up from within specific sects of Nikāya Buddhism, it could not have been Nikāya sect monks who created the Mahāyāna. It must have been lay people who were the managers of the stūpas.[54]

Gregory Schopen has shown conclusively that the standard interpretation of the *Mahāparinirvāṇa sūtra*'s prohibition of monastic stūpa worship is wrong.[55] The sūtra is far from prohibiting monastic worship of stūpas, since the prohibition applies only to participation in the actual funeral ceremony, and moreover may apply not to all monks but only to Ānanda, and not to all funerals but only to that of the Buddha. Be that as it may, it is clear that there are no doctrinal grounds, at least in earlier literature, for the idea that monks were prohibited from participation in stūpa rites. Schopen has also shown elsewhere that in fact stūpas were a common if not central feature of Indian Buddhist monastery life, and that the main stūpas of monastic sites did in fact belong to specific sects of Sectarian Buddhism.[56] As far as the prohibition to participate in dance, the offering of flowers and so on, Sasaki Shizuka has shown that this rule is not in the oldest stratum of the Vinaya tradition, and that even once introduced a specific exception was made for offerings to the Buddha, including stūpa offerings.[57] Given this, Hirakawa's argument against the monastic basis of stūpa worship can be shown to lack evidence, and with this falls the main pillar of his argument for the lay origins of the Mahāyāna. We may mention in addition the idea that only lay people would have been able to afford to endow such expensive structures as stūpas. Here again, Schopen has repeatedly demonstrated that contrary to the impression traditionally derived from a reading of the Vinayas, monks were not at all the completely penniless renunciants we sometimes romantically like to imagine them to have been. Some monastics seem to have been wealthy patrons, and perfectly capable of endowing expensive structures, and moreover of recording this fact in inscriptions carved on those structures.[58]

To be fair, Hirakawa has in fact repeatedly offered extremely detailed and learned arguments for the theories I have summarily critiqued here. A full critique worthy of his arguments would be involved and lengthy, and I am happy to refer here to the detailed studies of Sasaki in this regard.[59] Moreover, the model Hirakawa suggests is not necessarily his alone. A sociological study of a new religious movement has clearly stated the presuppositions as follows:[60]

> New movements in religion tend, in the nature of things, to be the product of lay initiative. They have often arisen as responses to what have been perceived as deficiencies in the clergy, and often as a challenge—expressed or implicit—to priestly dominance. In effect, that challenge has usually been a demand for opportunities of more open access to spiritual resources, accompanied by distrust of complicated liturgies and elaborate doctrines which the priests alone are permitted to claim fully to understand. The lay impulse has been to seek more immediate spiritual help with less of the manipulative apparatus in

> which priestly classes tend to invest. Consciously or unconsciously, the lay movement seeks a reorientation concerning the vital focus of spiritual endeavor (for example, by emphasis on faith rather than on ritual performances). Priests seek to preserve orthodoxy and become custodians of sacred objects and places. They mark off their purported piety by distinctive means of training, by tonsure, dress, and ritual routines, all of which lead them to distance themselves from ordinary people and everyday affairs which not infrequently they see as mundane, and perhaps even as a source of pollution. In such circumstances, laymen are sometimes prompted to seek new means by which to acquire protection from the untoward and for new sources of reassurance about salvation (in whatever form salvation may, in their culture, be conceived). Such a growing divergence of orientation is likely to be exacerbated if a priesthood—purporting to offer indispensable service—in itself becomes cynical, corrupt, and self-indulgent. A process of this kind leads a disenchanted laity either to have recourse to competing agents who claim to offer assistance toward salvation, or to take spiritual affairs into their own hands.[61]

I do not mean to imply that Hirakawa has knowingly borrowed a model from the sociology of religion, but rather I want to suggest that this model is fundamentally taken for granted in much of the thinking concerning religious history, especially that which is seen to relate to the evolution of "sects." There is little point in speculating on the general applicability of the model in religious studies as a whole, but even if the model were generally applicable, it would remain true that it need not necessarily apply to each and every case.

Now, even if we posit Mahāyāna Buddhism as a movement—or, I should prefer to say at least for the early Mahāyāna, movement-s, plural—which has doctrinal but no institutional existence as such, which is neither a *nikāya*, an orthodox ordination lineage, nor a *vāda*, a school defined by doctrines, but rather a sort of meta-level movement, which drew its adherents from monastic Buddhism but adherence to which in no way contradicted the established sectarian identification of its followers, and which was co-local, compatiable with, and existed within, the complex of these Buddhist communities, distinguished from non-Mahāyāna primarily on the level of philosophical doctrine or "systematics," some emphases in practice, forms of literary or artistic expression, and some aspects of mythology and cosmology, and even if we accept that it was only in this realm of doctrine and rhetoric that Hīnayāna Buddhism existed, without any real-world existence in India or elsewhere, I think our quest for definition has still fallen into a maze from which it might not escape.

Even if we accept that the distinction between Mahāyāna and non-Mahāyāna we find in the works of Indian authors has, from a descriptive rather than a polemical point of view, been ill-drawn, the existence of the very distinction itself fixes the basic and hence following questions in a dichotomous frame,

setting Mahāyāna against non-Mahāyāna. In other words, the question "What is Mahāyāna Buddhism?" still means more or less the same thing as "What is the relation between Mahāyāna and the Buddhism of the sects?"

By failing to question the very framework which lies behind the dualistic distinction which we recognize as very likely nothing more than polemical, we are casting the whole question of the identity of Mahāyāna Buddhism in entirely the wrong terms.

Another way to look at the problem is to suggest that an examination of the underlying models of definition and classification which have, albeit no doubt subconsciously, guided scholars so far may reveal failures of their theories to adequately account for all the relevant data. Since a theory is nothing more than a structure or construct within which to organize data, such failures are fatal. An examination of the possible models for definition and classification may likewise suggest new approaches to the problem.

Philosophers of language distinguish between two basic types of definitions, "Stipulative" definitions and "Lexical" definitions. In the former, one stipulates exactly what one means by a certain term, whether or not that sense is intuitive or even acceptable to others. In many cases we must rely on stipulative definitions, and in fields like science and law, they are usually essential. For instance, laws or contracts without stipulated definitions are unenforceable and often meaningless. On the other hand, for many uses stipulative definitions are obviously *not* what are needed. In most cases, in fact, we could not carry out ordinary communication if we were to rely on stipulative definitions. What we are concerned with in these cases is "lexical" definition.

Lexical definition is what a dictionary aims for. How is a word most generally used? What do most users of a word intend by it? What do they intend it to mean? A dictionary aims, among other things, to formalize for us the consensus of a word's usage. One problem, of course, is that this meaning is often extremely hard to pin down. *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, for example, defines "red" as

> Any of a group of colors that may vary in lightness and saturation, whose hue resembles that of blood; the hue of the long-wave end of the spectrum; one of the additive or light primaries; one of the psychological primary hues, evoked in the normal observer by the long-wave end of the spectrum.

It is clear how deeply contextualized this definition is. "Red" resembles blood. How close does something have to be to "resemble" something else? What is the "long-wave" end of the light spectrum? How long is long?[62] The same dictionary says that a "hero" is "any man noted for feats of courage or nobility of purpose," or "a person prominent in some event, field, period, or cause by reason of his special achievements or contributions." But what is "nobility of purpose"? Are not villains also "prominent"? What is the problem here?

One problem is that this type of definition aims at identifying an *essence*. These definitions aim to locate one or a very few characteristics that are definitive. And this is very problematic. A definition is a description of a *class*. All members of a class are included in that class because the definition applies to them. Classes are defined by definitions, and what definitions do is define classes.[63] But a definition will not only qualify a given particular for *inclusion* in a class; it must also *exclude* other instances. A definition tells us what qualifies as a member of a class, and also what does *not* qualify. That is one reason that the definition of "hero" has a problem. The word "prominent"—which the same dictionary defines as "widely known"—does not exclude villains. And of course, our common usage tells us that villains are not heroes. While this definition is perhaps sufficiently *inclusive*, it is not sufficiently *exclusive*.

And what of essences? A good definition lets us make *explicit* the *implicit* character of the object of the definition, and establish its *unity as an object*. In other words, it allows us to include and exclude appropriately. Generally speaking, we ordinarily assume that we can do this by locating the definitive features or characteristics of the object of our definition, the feature or group of features which are *necessary and sufficient* to determine membership in the class. This is what we generally mean by *essence*. If such features exist, we can establish what is called a *Monothetic Class* (see below). When we are using real language, however, we generally do not function in this way. We work, as the dictionary quoted above recognizes, by associating *resemblances*. We work by *analogy*. Something is "red" if it resembles—in the appropriate ways—other things we think of as "red."[64] But how can we formalize that understanding? Or, first, why would we *want* to formalize it?

Of course, we generally don't need to formalize definitions. Most readers have probably never looked up the word "red" in a dictionary. Why should one? We usually only need to resort to definitions in borderline cases, or when there is a problem. But sometimes it is important to resort to a definition, and so we sometimes do want to formalize our understanding. How can we do this when we cannot find an essence, a feature or set of features which is both necessary and sufficient to qualify an object for inclusion in a class?

In developing his philosophy of language, Ludwig Wittgenstein spoke about what he called "Family Resemblances" [*Philosophical Investigations* §67].[65] How do we know, Wittgenstein wondered, that something is a "game." What ties all sorts of games together into a class? Wittgenstein of course was not concerned to formalize the similarity he spoke about, being primarily interested in logical and natural language problems. But a coincidence of intellectual history brought together these ideas of Wittgenstein with those of scholars who *are* concerned to formalize such "Family Resemblances," namely the biological taxonomists. The problem for such scholars is really quite simple. What animals (or for some, plants) are related to others? What forms a species? The connection between Wittgenstein's ideas and those of the biological taxonomists led to the suggestion of utilizing a different approach to classification which does away

with the requirement for necessary and sufficient conditions. This approach is that of the *Polythetic Class*. The Polythetic Class, of course, contrasts with the Monothetic Class mentioned above.

In a Polythetic Class, to be considered a member of the class each object must possesses a large (but unspecified) number of features or characteristics which are considered relevant for membership in that class. And each such set of features must be possessed by a large number of members of the class. But—and this is the key—there is no set of features which must be possessed by *every* member of the class. There is no one feature or set of features necessary and sufficient for inclusion in the class. When a class has no single feature or set of features common to all its members, it is called Fully Polythetic.

This may be expressed in over-simplified form graphically:[66]

| | *Individuals* | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *1* | *2* | *3* | *4* | *5* | *6* |
| Characteristics | A | | A | A | | |
| | B | B | B | | | |
| | C | C | | C | | |
| | | D | D | D | | |
| | | | | | F | F |
| | | | | | G | G |
| | | | | | H | H |

Here individuals 1, 2, 3, 4 form a fully polythetic class, while 5 and 6 form a monothetic class.

One can see how this is an attempt to formalize the notion of Family Resemblances. We can think about it this way: How does one define a "family"? We might want to consider features such as marriage or blood relation, but what of adopted children? We might want to consider cohabitation, but of course, many family members live apart. And so on. Any single feature is open to the challenge of counter-example, but at the same time our classification must also *exclude*, so we cannot simply rely on exhaustive listing of possible features, lest we be forced therefore to include individuals we want to exclude. So while rejecting the "necessary and sufficient features" model, by collecting a large number of features we can establish a pattern, a resemblance between individuals. And in fact, many numerical taxonomists try to formalize this process to the point where it is almost automatic, that is, where the degree of resemblance can be calculated numerically.

There is of course a difference between natural sciences and social or humanistic studies. While for the most part natural scientists try to select features which are themselves discrete empirical particulars (for instance, does an animal have an internal or external skeleton?), even for them an element of the *ad hoc*

remains.[67] Nevertheless, despite a certain ambiguity, in many cases natural scientists *can* select monothetically defined features. But for those of us interested in studying social phenomena, the very features which we must consider will themselves often constitute polythetic classes.[68]

A particularly good case for the application of this method concerns the notion of religion. Religion has been notoriously difficult to define, though it is not necessary to recount that history here. Rather we should direct our attention to the question of the *method* of definition. What we want to do, in a nutshell, is find a definition which will allow us to include in the class of religion all those phenomena which we feel are religions or religious, and exclude those we feel are not. In other words, we want to formalize our lexical definitions. Many previous attempts have failed because counter-examples could be produced, because the suggested definitions excluded individuals we sensed, as users of the word "religion," to be religions, or because they included individuals we felt were *not* religions; that is, they failed either to properly include or properly exclude. Sometimes this has caused funny pseudo-problems. Most people consider Buddhism to be a religion, yet many Buddhists do not consider their object of ultimate concern to be God or a god. So, some scholars have suggested that Buddhism is not, in fact, a religion, but rather a philosophy. These scholars tried to impose a stipulative definition where a lexical definition belonged. But those who were willing to let the data direct the theory, instead of letting the theory or definition make them manipulate their data, realized therefore that theism is obviously not a good touchstone for the definition of a religion. The suggestion that Buddhism is not a religion is an example of failure to properly *in*clude an object in the class.

On the other hand, if we look to the functionalists, those who suggest that religion is what produces meaning and focus in one's life, what organizes one's social interactions and so on, we have another problem—not this time of *in*clusion but of *ex*clusion. A theistic definition did not enable us to include Buddhism as a religion, which we want to do. A functional definition, on the other hand, may prevent us from *excluding* American Baseball, for example, from the class of religions. For of course, baseball provides a source of great, perhaps even ultimate, meaning for many people, it can structure their worldview and their social interactions, can produce and focus meaning, and so on. But we should expect our definition of religion to exclude baseball, and so while the functional features which might determine inclusion in the class are certainly important, they cannot be necessary and sufficient. A polythetic approach, on the other hand, allows us to incorporate as many features as we feel necessary, without making any one particular feature decisive. This is its great strength.

Before we try to apply this all to the problem of Mahāyāna Buddhism, let us make the assumption, which I think is not radical, that Mahāyāna Buddhism is a kind of Buddhism, and that there are kinds of Buddhism which are not Mahāyāna. But this is not necessarily the same thing as saying that Mahāyāna is a species of Buddhism, an important distinction. For what, indeed, is the relation

between Mahāyāna Buddhism and the rest of Buddhism, or between Mahāyāna and the larger class of Buddhism of which it is a part?

When defining individual religions or religious traditions, we are usually talking about a *structurally* different type of class than the class of religion. The class "religion" qualifies instances for membership purely on what is called by the biologists *phenetic* grounds.[69] Phenetic relationships are relationships of similarity, which are defined strictly synchronically, since they indicate a product. There need be no historical relationship whatsoever between two instances for them to both be members of the same class. In the study of religion an instance of this type of relation is what we call phenomenological similarity. As van der Leeuw has discussed in such interesting detail,[70] we can talk about instances of prayer, of asceticism, and so on in traditions which have had no historical contact, and in the same way we can talk about "religions" without implying in any way a historical connection between the world's religions. In other words, we can group together instances without regard for their history. Their present similarity is what is of interest.[71]

In contrast to this, *phyletic* relationships show the course of evolution, and thus indicate a process. Two individuals related *phyletically* share some commonly inherited features from a common ancestor, and they may share this feature even if their evolutionary paths diverged in the ancient past. If the common ancestry is relatively recent, we speak of *shared derived characteristics*,[72] which link two or more individuals, but separate them from the rest of their common ancestors. Such recent relations, which are defined diachronically, are termed "cladistic."

So we have two basic categories: First are relationships which are synchronic, in which two individuals may be grouped together on the basis of ancient common inheritances or common chance similarities, adventitious similarities which have been independently acquired by the individual. Second are relations based on common similarities due to a genetic and historical link which produced in both individuals a shared innovation, not shared with their common ancestor.

Phenetic—that is, synchronic, phenomenological—classification is possible for all groups, whether or not they have any previous, that is to say historical, connection, but cladistic or phyletic classification requires historical inference. When we talk about the class "religion," we are of course concerned with phenetic relationships, but when we study a given religious tradition, it is usually the cladistic form of classification that we are interested in, which is to say, historical links are vital.[73]

We can certainly relate some traditions *within* the class "Buddhism" to each other from some perspectives by means of their shared derived characteristics—that is, cladistically. Thus, broadly speaking Mongolian Buddhism can be linked to Tibetan Buddhism by, among other things, their shared derived characteristics, or their shared innovations. We can draw a tree-diagram—what is called by the biologists a cladogram—illustrating such relations.[74]

But does this same approach apply to the object we call Mahāyāna Buddhism? Does the pair of Mahāyāna and other-than-Mahāyāna form, as many writers on Buddhism seem to assume, what is technically called in cladistics a "sister group," that is two lineages more closely related to each other than to any other lineages?[75] Or is the whole question being asked in a misleading way? Is it possible that scholars who have considered the question have somehow assumed some version of a model which mirrors the biologist's cladistic classification? Naturally it is unlikely that their motivation for this is to be found in biological classification itself, and while it is obvious that one possible source is an analogical extension of the Protestant Reformation idea, and the relation between Catholicism and Protestantism, it is also far from impossible that general notions of necessary and sufficient conditions and of species classification have led scholars to certain assumptions. It is these very assumptions which I think we must question. And so we come back to our core question: Just what *is* the relationship of Mahāyāna to the rest of Buddhism?

The definition we seek of Mahāyāna Buddhism must be a lexical definition. It would be pointless for us to suggest a stipulative definition, although such stipulative definitions offered for example in traditional texts like that of Yijing may certainly become data for our quest. We want to determine what are generally agreed to be the limits of the class, in this case of Mahāyāna Buddhism. And this class should be defined not monothetically but polythetically, through a large number of features which cumulatively circumscribe the class. I suggest the place we will look for features which will lead us to a definition of Mahāyāna Buddhism should in the first place be the Mahāyāna sūtras.

But—and this is not as meaningless as it might at first sound—Mahāyāna sūtras are Buddhist texts, and all Buddhist texts are Buddhist texts. In other words, we assume that all Buddhist texts are Buddhist—but really without knowing what we mean by this, and without having formalized this feeling. This suggests that rather than asking what makes a Mahāyāna Buddhist text Mahāyāna it might be better to ask what makes it both Buddhist and Mahāyāna. Or we might visualize the problem in a quite different way: is there any way we can localize Mahāyāna texts within some imaginary multi-dimensional space which we call "Buddhism"?

If we imagine Buddhism as a multi-dimensional space, and we do not prejudge the locations of different kinds of Buddhism—with for example Theravāda in one corner and Zen far away in another—but instead start our thinking on the level of individual texts, I think we would quickly realize that various texts would be located at various points in this multi-dimensional matrix, some texts being located more closely to each other than to a third type of text. Of course, there can be no such thing as an absolute location, but only a location relative to other objects in the space (just as is the case in the three dimensions of our physical universe). This is related to the "degree of resemblance" calculations which, as I mentioned above, numerical taxonomists employ. Slightly more thought would show us that the problem is more complicated still. For

what are the criteria by means of which we would locate our texts in this space? In fact, there is an infinite number of possible criteria we might want to use to locate the objects of our study, and an infinite number of ways of relating our data points to each other, and thus an infinite number of multi-dimensional matrices. For instance, we should recognize that even the unit "text" is itself amenable to further analysis and localization. Let us consider the example of one sūtra, the *Kāśyapaparivarta*, just for the sake of argument. We have a Sanskrit version (in this case only one nearly complete manuscript, with a few variant fragments, but sometimes we will have more), a Tibetan translation, and a number of Chinese versions, not to mention a commentary to the text extant in several versions, quotations in other works, and so on. From one perspective, we would expect all of these to be located very closely together in our imaginary space; they are all versions of, or intimately related to, the "same text." From another perspective, however, if we are interested in translation vocabulary for instance, we might also have good reasons to want to relate the Chinese translation of the *Kāśyapaparivarta* of one translator more closely to other translations of the same translator than to other Chinese versions of the *Kāśyapaparivarta*, and certainly more closely than to the Tibetan translation of the same text. Or again, a text with doctrinal content might from that perspective be related more closely to another of similar content, the Heart Sūtra (*Prajñāpāramitāhṛdaya*) with the Diamond Sūtra (*Vajracchedikā*), for instance, while if we were interested in the same text used liturgically we might group it with quite another text or texts to which it might be unrelated in terms of its content but with which it may be used together or similarly in ritual, the same *Prajñāpāramitāhṛdaya* with the Smaller *Sukhāvatīvyūha*, perhaps. So the sorts of groupings the data will produce will depend on what we are asking of our data. There will not be one final definitive grouping, that is to say, no one unique localization of our objects within our imaginary multi-dimensional space. And the more flexible the organization of our data, the more comprehensively we will be able to understand and classify its internal relations. To put this another way, none of the objects we are interested in—no matter how we are likely to define those objects, singly or as groups—will be related to another object or set of objects in a single, unique way. The relation will depend on what aspects of the objects we choose to relate every time we ask a question. And if we map the relations between objects within our multi-dimensional space, the geography of that space will therefore be determined by the combination of objects and aspects in question. Since we have multiple objects and virtually limitless aspects to compare—constrained only by the imagination which generates our questions—no unique mapping or solution is even theoretically possible.

There are in fact established techniques available in the so-called Social Sciences for thinking about such problems. One of the most important numerical techniques is called Cluster Analysis. What cluster analysis enables one to do is rationally deal with a large amount of data, clustering it into more compact forms for easier manageability. The clusters may be defined in any number of

ways. It might be possible for us, for instance, to select features, such as the occurrence of doctrinal concepts, key words, stock phrases or the like, and code them 1 or 0 for Mahāyāna or non-Mahāyāna. But given our goals, one of which is to avoid prejudicing the relationship between Mahāyāna and other forms of Buddhism as this monothetic classification would, such an approach can be seen to embody the same sort of flaw inherent in previous thinking on the subject.[76] A much better approach would be to cluster discretely rather than cumulatively, that is, to measure the presence or absence of given factors, and then measure the total clustered factors individually, not additively. The clusters which result would, then, allow for the formation of a polythetic class.[77] Naturally, the mathematics behind such statistical methods of multivariate analysis are sophisticated, and I do not pretend to have even a rudimentary understanding of the technical details. My wish here is to introduce the broadest, most general outlines of the procedure, and to appeal for a consideration by scholars of Buddhism of this new way of conceptualizing the very nature of the problem, rather than to offer a definitive array of statistical techniques to carry out the details of the project.

Let us step back for a moment to the self-evident claim offered above: Mahāyāna Buddhism is Buddhism. As such, not only should instances of Mahāyāna Buddhism be related and relatable to other objects in the same class, but to other objects in the larger class "Buddhism" as well. Just how those Mahāyāna Buddhist objects are related to Buddhist objects will provide us an answer to our question concerning the relation between Mahāyāna Buddhism and Buddhism as a whole—that is to say, the question What is Mahāyāna Buddhism?

Another way of putting this is as follows: If we start with the assumption that there is something called Mahāyāna, but we do not know what its features are, we will want to look at the objects which we think might be definitive of Mahāyāna and extract from those the qualities which group or cluster them together. Moreover, if we think these same or other objects might also belong somehow to another set—even on a different logical level, for example, the set of Buddhism at large—we will want to have a way of determining to what extent the object is Mahāyāna and to what extent it is simply Buddhist. That is, what we will be looking for is not a presence or absence of Mahāyāna, but a question of degree of identification with some cluster, or even better of general location within the whole space, in this case of "Buddhism."

The only attempt I know of to do anything even remotely like this is that of Shizutani Masao,[78] who looked not at Buddhist literature in general but rather tried to stratify Mahāyāna sūtras chronologically into what he termed Primitive Mahāyāna (*genshi daijō*) and Early Mahāyāna (*shoki daijō*) on the basis of the presence or absence of certain concepts and technical terms. Unfortunately, as far as I can see, he approached the problem purely impressionistically and without any rigorous method. Moreover, I have grave doubts about the possibility of establishing even a relative chronology of this literature purely on the basis of internal evidence, not to mention the backward methodology of such an

approach. Nevertheless, careful reading of Shizutani's study might yield valuable clues for future research.

What I suggest instead in no way precludes taking into account the age or relative age of our sources; it simply does not depend on such a determination. The comprehensive comparison of multiple aspects of a large number of objects will allow us to see the multiple natures of these objects, their relative similarities and differences, in a comparative light. Let us again consider an example. Individuals do not hold consistent sets of ideological or political viewpoints. Not all vegetarians are opposed to the death penalty, not all abortion rights activists oppose nuclear power, and so on. The complex make up of ideologies which characterizes any given population, however, can be studied statistically. It is a similar census which I suggest for the population of "Buddhism," the objects constituting which include texts, art objects, and so on.

Once we reject the groundless assumption that Mahāyāna and non-Mahāyāna Buddhism are related in the fashion of cladistic classification, then we are freed to explore other dimensions of the definitions of Mahāyāna Buddhism. We are enabled and empowered to think in terms of degrees of similarity and relatedness, rather than simply the dichotomy related/unrelated. This in turn enables us to think more fluidly about the ways in which, for example, a Mahāyāna Buddhist text may borrow literary conceits of earlier literature, or a mythological episode, while reformulating the doctrinal content of the episode. It gives us a tool to think about multiple ways that one and the same object might be used, while the object itself remains essentially unchanged. A stone image of Śākyamuni may have different meanings in different ritual contexts, just as a textual pericope may shift its meaning—or we should better say, have its meaning shifted—by its changing context. Such an appreciation gives us good tools for rethinking problems such as the "transfer of merit" or the "perfections," claimed as characteristic of Mahāyāna Buddhism but found in non-Mahāyāna literature as well, among a host of other possibilities.

This also enables us to deal with the problem, alluded to above, that very obviously much of the literature commonly cited in discussions of Mahāyāna Buddhism as that of "Sectarian Buddhism," and surely not rarely implied to represent some pre-Mahāyāna ideas, in fact dates from a period after the rise of the Mahāyāna Buddhist movement. If we assume that Mahāyāna Buddhism arose in the first century of the Common Era—a reasonable dating which in reality we have very little or no evidence to justify—and we simultaneously recognize that no Chinese translation of Buddhist material predates that period, that the Pāli canon was not written down before the fifth century, although its redaction clearly predates that time, and so on, we must come to appreciate that even if we wish to be much more careful about our comparisons of Mahāyāna and pre-Mahāyāna materials than we have been heretofore, we will have a very tough time of it. To this we add the problem of contamination. If we revert to the previous assumption of a cladistic classification for a moment, and borrow here the model of the philologists' cladogram, the stemma or tree diagram he has

borrowed from the biologist in the first place, we will have to recognize that the history of Mahāyāna Buddhism reflects a heavily cross-contaminated situation. The materials to which we are comparing our extant Mahāyāna Buddhist literature may well have been written or revised in light of that very Mahāyāna Buddhist material itself, and vice versa ad infinitum. Even theoretically, there is no way to produce a clean schematic of the relations in question, any more than it would be possible to clarify a mixture in a glass after orange juice had been poured into soda, that mix poured into coffee, then added back into the orange juice, and so on. The contamination is complete, its history irreversible.[79] This leaves us only with the possibility of clarifying various aspects of the phenetic, synchronic relations between objects of our interest. But this does not in any way mean that we are to ignore traditional information. Yijing—and of course he is not the only source—tells us that worship of bodhisattvas is definitive of Mahāyāna Buddhism. We need not take this, even if he so intended it, as a necessary and sufficient condition to accept it as one point in our data set, one object which is to be brought into conjunction with others. The same applies to the problem of the identification of a given text as, for example, a Mahāyāna sūtra. Chinese sūtra catalogues do not give us a definitive answer, but provide one feature to be taken into account in the process of formulating a polythetic definition. And so too for features such as the mention of emptiness, bodhisattvas, the perfections, and so on. With such tools in hand we may be able to approach anew the problem of the definition and classification of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

In conclusion, let me explain what is behind the title of my paper, which I confess to have borrowed from authors more clever than I. I was inspired in the first place by the title of a paper by the paleontologist and biologist Stephen J. Gould, "What, If Anything, is a Zebra?"; Gould in turn had borrowed his title from a paper of Albert E. Wood, "What, if Anything, Is a Rabbit?"[80] What Gould wonders is whether the various stripped horses actually make up a cladistic group. If they do not, then strictly and cladistically speaking there is no such thing as a zebra. This line of thought got me thinking about Mahāyāna Buddhism. I first thought I could ask "What, if anything, is Mahāyāna Buddhism?" because I wanted to know whether Mahāyāna Buddhism was cladistically related to non-Mahāyāna Buddhism. But what I have come to realize is that what we really want to know is how to locate Mahāyāna with respect to Buddhism as a whole, and as a part of that question we want to understand above all how objects are defined as "Mahāyāna" in the first place. But cladistics cannot help us here. Asking about the relation of Mahāyāna to Buddhism as a whole is closer to asking about the relation of the zebra to the category "animal" (or perhaps "mammal"). The tools we must use to approach the definition and classification of Mahāyāna Buddhism are much less rigid and dichotomous than cladistics, much more fluid, variable and flexible. And so, with an aesthetic reluctance but a methodological confidence, I concede that this incarnation of Gould's title does not properly set the stage for the task facing us as we attempt

to confront the problem of how to define Mahāyāna Buddhism. But after all, perhaps form may be permitted to trump content just this once. As a title "The Definition of Mahāyāna Buddhism as a Polythetic Category" seems sufficiently anaemic to justify the poetic licence.

## Notes

* I wish to express my sincere thanks to my erstwhile student Ms. Bonnie Gulas, whose insights into taxonomy from the viewpoint of paleontology have been very helpful to me. Thanks also to Profs. Kenneth Bailey and Richard Ethridge for their encouragement.

1 One of the terminological issues that might be addressed is whether we aim at typology or taxonomy; the former is conceptual and qualitative, the latter empirical and quantitative. I think we will see below that ultimately what we seek is a taxonomy. See Bailey 1994:6–7.

2 Bareau 1987:195.

3 Ryūkoku Daigaku 1914–1922:5.3169c, s.v.

4 Nakamura 1981:920cd.

5 Oda 1917:1144b.

6 *Hōbōgirin*, p. 767 (published 1994).

7 Mochizuki 1932–36:4.3248b.

8 Lamotte 1954.

9 Faxian (mid-late 4th century), Xuanzang (602–664) and Yijing (635–713).

10 Takakusu 1896:14–15. The text is the *Nanhai jigui neifa-zhuan* T. 2125 (LIV) 205c11–13.

11 Takakusu 1896:xxii–xxiii.

12 Barth 1898, while actually a detailed study in its own right, is written as a review of Takakusu 1896 and Chavannes 1894.

13 Barth 1898:448.

14 Barth 1898:449–450.

15 Barth 1898:450. It is actually the Vinaya of the Mūla-Sarvāstivāda that Yijing translated into Chinese. Although the relation between these two sects is not yet entirely clear, it would be well to avoid conflating the two whenever possible. I confess that I remain unconvinced by the arguments of Enomoto 2000 that the two, Sarvāstivāda and Mūla-Sarvāstivāda, are the same.

16 Przyluski 1926–28:361–362.

17 Przyluski 1926–28:363.

18 La Vallée Poussin 1929:234. In what is perhaps an isolated case in Japan, the same position was espoused by Tomomatsu Entai 1932:332. There can be little doubt that Tomomatsu, who studied in France, was deeply influenced by Przyluski's thought.

19 van der Leeuw 1938:1.261 goes even farther: "[T]he sect . . . severs itself not only from the given community but from the "world" in general. . . . [T]he sect is not founded on a religious covenant that is severed from another religious community such as the church; it segregates itself, rather, from community in general. . . . The correlate of the sect is therefore not the church but the community; it is the most extreme outcome of the covenant."

20 The only meaningful candidate for a "Buddhist Church" in India is the so-called Universal Community, the saṁgha of the four directions. However, it appears that this was a purely abstract and imaginary entity, with no institutional existence. (But it is not known, for example, how gifts to this universal community, often recorded in inscriptions, were administered.) It may, in this sense, be something like

the "Brotherhood of Man." This Brotherhood, though it may exist, has no officers, no treasurer, no meeting hall, no newsletter.

21 It is this latter type of definition, however, which was assumed by T.W. Rhys Davids 1908:307a when he wrote about "Sects (Buddhist)" for the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*. Rhys Davids assumed the meaning of "sect in the European sense—i.e. of a body of believers in one or more doctrines not held by the majority, a body with its own endowments, its own churches or chapels, and its own clergy ordained by itself." He went on to say 308b: "There were no 'sects' in India, in any proper use of that term. There were different tendencies of opinion, named after some teacher . . ., or after some locality . . ., or after the kind of view dominant. . . . All the followers of such views designated by the terms or names occurring in any of the lists were members of the same order and had no separate organization of any kind." I think this view is also questionable, but in any case the point is that Rhys Davids is applying here a very different definition of the term "sect" than I am.

22 This point, and the terminological distinction, has been noticed and reiterated by Heinz Bechert a number of times recently. Bechert however refers in his notes only to La Vallée Poussin's discussion.

23 La Vallée Poussin 1930:20 wrote: "I believe that in the India of Asaṅga as in that of Śāntideva one could not have been a Buddhist monk without being associated with one of the ancient sects, without accepting one of the archaic Vinayas." On the other hand, I mean exactly what I say by the expression "there is no evidence. . . ." This does not mean that there absolutely were no monks other than those associated with Sectarian ordination lineages. It means we have no evidence on this point.

24 La Vallée Poussin 1930:25. The reference at the end of this quotation is a translation, although without any mention of the source, from the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* (Wogihara 1936:173.5–10). La Vallée Poussin had in fact quoted this passage years earlier, 1909:339–40, there giving the Sanskrit in note 1. At that time he also noted the difficulty of translating *kliṣṭā āpatti*, suggesting "un péché mortel."

25 La Vallée Poussin 1930:32–33. In this preface to Dutt 1930:vii–viii, La Vallée Poussin expressed exactly the same sentiments.

26 Bechert has repeatedly published more or less the same remarks, sometimes in the same words. See for example: 1964:530–31; 1973:12–13; 1976:36–37; 1977:363–64; 1982:64–65, and 1992:96–97. Hisashi Matsumura 1990:82–85, note 53, has also offered some bibliographic notes which indicate his awareness of the opinions of Barth and his successors.

27 Bechert 1973:12. The reference to the *Kriyāsaṅgrahapañjikā* is evidently to Dutt 1931:263.

28 Bechert 1992:96–97, virtually identical with 1977:363–64.

29 As an example see Cohen 1995:16, who says, without a shred of evidence: "Mahāyānists might come from all *nikāyas*; yet there is an expectation that prior *nikāya* affiliations are moot once a *yānic* conversion is made."

30 It is in this sense formally similar to the designation *tīrthika* or *tīrthya*, the former defined by Monier-Williams 1899 s.v. quite well as "an adherent or head of any other than one's own creed." The terms are, of course, derogatory. (It is perhaps also worth noting that, as far as I know, Buddhist texts do not refer to other Buddhists as *tīrthika*.)

31 Lévi 1907:I.10d: *yat hīnaṁ hīnaṁ eva tat.*

32 An example of a scholar led into just such an error is Cohen 1995:20, who says: "Of all the categories through which to reconstruct Indian Buddhism's history, Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna are the most productive. Nevertheless, our reconstructions have a secret life of their own. Each *yāna* can be defined positively, through a necessary and sufficient characteristic for individuals' membership within that taxon. Moreover, because

these two *yānas* are logical opposites, each can also be defined negatively, through its lack of the other's necessary and sufficient characteristic. However, in both cases, these positive and negative definitions are not conceptually equivalent. That is, the Mahāyāna is positively characterized by its members' pursuit of the bodhisattva path; the Hīnayāna is negatively characterized as the non-Mahāyāna, i.e., its members do not necessarily pursue Buddhahood as their ideal. However, when positively characterized the Hīnayāna is defined by members' affiliation with one or another *nikāya*, which, of course, means that the Mahāyāna is known negatively by its members' institutional separation from those same *nikāyas*."

33 See Kent 1982. Kent, a specialist in sectarian movements but not terribly knowledgeable about Buddhism, suggested that the rhetoric of Mahāyāna sūtras resembles the rhetoric common to embattled sectarian groups in various religions. He portrayed the contrast between Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna monks as one of great hostility, and emphasized the role of the laity as a force in forming the Mahāyāna communities and their outlook. Notice here that Kent's use of the term "sect" follows the standard dichotomous Weberian definition, and essentially differs from the way I use the term.

34 I will discuss below the views of Lamotte, who considers the Mahāyāna to be anti-clerical. Hirakawa also believes that Mahāyāna texts are anti-clerical. His reasoning, as Sasaki has pointed out, is based on the idea that the so-called *Śrāvakayāna* is heavily criticized in that literature. But attacks on the *Śrāvakayāna* are not attacks on monasticism in general (that is, *śrāvaka bhikṣu*), but attacks on those who hold doctrinal positions which are worthy of criticism, that is anti-Mahāyāna positions. There is nothing "anti-clerical" about it. Nevertheless, as Sasaki has emphasized, this misunderstanding pervades Hirakawa's work on the subject. See Sasaki 1997.

35 At least in Mahāyāna literature, as far as I know. On this point, however, see the interesting study of Peter Masefield 1986.

36 Quite obviously, in the case of some texts, as Shimoda 1991 has argued for the *Mahāyāna, Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* for instance, a given literary work may be the product of more than one community, as it grew over time. I do not necessarily agree completely with the details of Shimoda's analysis of the case of the *Mahāyāna Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*, but the general point is beyond dispute.

37 This should not be taken to mean that, with a certain hindsight, we may not find traditional attributions to be occasionally wrong. We do find, for example, that Chinese scripture catalogues sometimes designate alternate translations of Mahāyāna scriptures as non-Mahāyāna. We may note for example the cases of T. 1469, in fact a section of the *Kāśyapaparivarta*, or T. 170, in fact a translation of the *Rāṣṭrapāla-paripṛcchā*. Neither text is recognized by traditional Chinese classifications as a Mahāyāna scripture. I am of course aware of the fact that the classification of scriptures in China and Tibet (and doubtless in India too) was a polemical activity, motivated by a multitude of forces. These sources are not "objective," of course, a trait they share with every other type of source.

38 I think as a clear case of the *Śikṣāsamuccaya*, dating from a rather later period to be sure, in which diverse sūtras are quoted together without apparent regard for their initial source or provenance. I think that the approach of this text to its materials reflects a sort of "leveling."

39 The comparable situation in studies of the "tree of life" is critiqued in Gordon 1999.

40 I am quite aware that there is a certain circularity to this suggestion, but, as I said above, I would prefer to see the logic as spiral rather than as a closed circle, progress being possible.

41 Harrison 1993:139–140.

42 I do not know if this is what Mochizuki 1988:157 means when he says that "The *Mahāratnakūṭa*, viewed from the point of view of its establishment, may be called a

Medieval Mahāyāna scripture." He may be referring to the compilation of the collection by Bodhiruci in the eighth century, but at the end of the same paragraph, Mochizuki asserts that these *Mahāratnakūṭa* texts are certainly older than the *Mahāyāna Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*.

43 Maeda 1903.

44 The situation is nuanced by the existence of the categories of *samānasaṁvāsaka* and *nānāsaṁvāsaka* monks. See Kieffer-Pülz 1993:52–54, and Chung and Kieffer-Pülz 1997:15. The constellation of *saṁghabheda, nikāyabheda, cakrabheda, karmabheda, samānasaṁvāsaka* and *nānāsaṁvāsaka* deserves to be thoroughly (re)investigated.

45 Sasaki 1992, 1993.

46 Let us recall the words of La Vallée Poussin yet again 1925:20: "Scholars set up between monk, novice and lay people a difference of degree, not of nature. All three are *sāmvarikas*, people who have accepted a *samvara* [vow—JAS] . . . All three possess the 'morality of engagement,' *samādāntaśīla*, the morality which consists not in the simple avoidance of sin but in the resolution to refrain from it."

47 Robinson 1965–66:25–26.

48 He flatly stated this in Lamotte 1955:86: "The advent of the Mahāyāna consecrated the triumph of lay aspirations."

49 Lamotte 1954:379.

50 He gives no reference, but the verse is in fact to be found in Finot 1901:28.17–18.

51 See Silk forthcoming.

52 I translate as "Nikāya community" Hirakawa's Japanese expression *buha kyōdan*. Although Hirakawa has published a certain number of articles in English, and an English translation of one half of his popular survey of Indian Buddhism has appeared (Hirakawa 1990), I refer in all cases to his latest Japanese publications, on the assumption that these present his most recent and considered views. He has, moreover, been publishing a series of Collected Works in which many of his older studies are reprinted, sometimes with some modifications. When newer versions of old papers are available, I generally refer to the more updated publication. In the main, the ideas discussed in the present context are found in Hirakawa 1954 (rpt. 1989).

53 Hirakawa seldom refers to Western scholarly works, but does occasionally take note of Dutt 1930—not however in Hirakawa 1954.

54 I believe we can lay out Hirakawa's argument rather clearly almost in his own words; Hirakawa 1954 (1989):377: Because lay believers (*zaike shinja*) erected the stūpa of the Buddha, and distributed his *śarīra* (relics), therefore (*yue ni*) in the time when the *Mahāparinirvāṇa sūtra* was redacted in the primitive Saṅgha the believers (*shinja*) were responsible for the administration of the stūpas (*buttō no keiei iji*), and bhikṣus were not directly involved. Because Vinayas of the sects (*buha*) discuss stūpas they were taken care of by the Nikāya Buddhist communities (*buha kyōdan*) in the Nikāya Buddhist Age (*buha bukkyō jidai*—whatever that is!). At the same time, there were many independent stūpas not connected with sects (*buha*). The many stūpas with dedicatory inscriptions which do not record a sect name proves there were stūpas not connected to a sect.

55 Schopen 1991.

56 See for example Schopen 1979 and 1985.

57 Sasaki 1991.

58 That monks and nuns of high status made many endowments was already pointed out, for example, by Njammasch 1974:281–282. However, she seems to resist the conclusion that such monks possess personal wealth (p. 283).

59 Most accessible is his English article Sasaki 1997.

60 Wilson and Dobbelaere 1994:232.

61 The authors go on, in the following paragraph, to make explicit the application of their remarks: "The process outlined in the abstract applies to various historical instances, conspicuously to the history of Protestantism. The Reformation, whist not an initially lay movement, met, with its doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, the aspirations of the laity, whilst subsequent dissenting and schismatic movements sought more direct access to saving grace, and wider opportunities for lay spiritual experience. Such struggles between priests and laity are by no means confined to Christian history: they have occurred in various religious contexts." The authors continue, in an overly credulous manner, I believe, to discuss the issue of the schism between the Nichiren Shōshū and the Sōka Gakkai, relying almost entirely it seems on polemical materials (in English!) published by the respective parties, primarily the latter.
62 It may be that there are technical definitions of "long wave light" in optics, stated for instance in terms of a range of Ångtröms. This simply makes this part of the definition into a virtual tautology, however.
63 It is worth stressing here that while individuals may evolve, classes do not. The characteristics of an individual may change such that the individual may no longer be included as a member of a certain class, but the class itself cannot change.
64 I leave out of consideration here the fact that all humans very closely agree on what is a good example of "red" and what is not. The psychology and neuroscience of this is rather complicated, but the result is a well established fact. See Varela, Thompson and Rosch 1996:157–171, esp. 168; the classic study is Berlin and Kay 1969.
65 Wittgenstein 1958:32.
66 Needham 1975:357.
67 For example, a researcher might ask, is or is not a single-called creature tolerant to 0.5 ppm of saline in solution? But why pick the number 0.5 ppm? Is it not totally arbitrary, *ad hoc*? Another example is found in the way morphological features are recognized by those attempting cladistic analyses. Holes and bumps on bones ("large fenestra," for instance) are recognized as significant in basically impressionistic ways.
68 Needham 1975:364.
69 Bailey 1983:256.
70 van der Leeuw 1938.
71 These are termed by the biologists homoplasies, similar characteristics independently evolved. When the origins of the similar characteristics are independently acquired they are termed convergent, when independently evolved parallel.
72 Technically called *synapomorphies*; Gould 1983:358.
73 This is not true, by the way, with classifications of *types* of religions, such as "New Age" Religions. Such classifications, like the classification "religion" itself, almost always rely on phenetic relationships.
74 On the application of biological concepts to other fields of study, see the very interesting essays in Hoenigswald and Wiener 1987.
75 Cf. Gould 1983:357.
76 This is also the same flaw to which cladistic analyses are prone.
77 See Bailey 1994.
78 Shizutani 1974.
79 Of course, some history may be recoverable even from highly contaminated or hybridized examples. Some of the processes which led to an extant complex state may be tracable—but not all.
80 Gould 1983; Wood 1957.

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